BUSINESS / B3-1

Pinoy kids wield P37-B spending power, says study

ACROSS / A22

MILF expects peace pact by August 2008

ENTERTAINMENT / F1

Regine, Ogie also share make-up tips

WORLD / A29

Amateurs solve Russia's last royal mystery

NEWS / A2

Puno calls for restorative kind of justice

No room for mistake in bomb experts' world

By Alcuin Papa

IN THE DEEP RECESSES OF THE POLICE ORganization, there exists an elite group of officers drawn together by a love-hate relationship with explosives.

It is a brotherhood bonded by the bomb, whose members are keepers of a highly technical and specialized knowledge of

NO ROOM/ A17

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER
BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS
Monday, November 26, 2007 ★★ 12 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 351 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

'I hate you, Mina' text jokes circulate

By Ephraim Aguilar
Inquirer Southern Luzon

ISNABERA DIN KAYA SI ARA MINA?

LEGAZPI CITY—I hate you, Mina.

This was part of a popular text joke that circulated among Al-

I HATE/ A21

GMA ally bidding for Transco scored

2 senators cite conflict of interest in auction

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

OPPOSITION SENATORS yesterday slammed the Arroyo administration's plan to give up government ownership of its power transmission assets, saying the official in charge of privatization is a boardroom ally of one of the bidders, businessman Enrique Razon Jr.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and Sen. Jamby Madrigal both alleged a "conflict of interest" in the privatization process for the multibillion-dollar National Transmission Corp. (Transco) that, they said, was shaping up to be a "*lutong makaw,*" or a charade.

Razon, a powerful businessman close to President Macapagal-Arroyo and her husband, Jose Miguel, leads the Monte Oro consortium that is bidding for the Transco assets with backing from State Grid Corp. of China.

The bidding is being handled by Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM), which is headed

GMA/ A8

WAITING FOR RESCUE. No, it's not Melvin Agnustura who is waiting for rescuers but a dog named Galis, on flooded R. Tadeo Street in Bustos, Bulacan, following the heavy rains. See Page A18 for what happened next. EDWIN BACASMAS

'Mina' lashes Isabela, may pull 'Lando' back to RP

By Alcuin Papa

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARROYO yesterday ordered what a senior official called "one of the largest evacuations in Philippine history" as Typhoon "Mina" barrelled its way closer to northern Luzon amid threats from two other storms east and west of the country.

The biggest of the three storms, Mina (international name: Mitag) blew from the east with sustained winds of 160 kilometers per hour and gusts of 195 kph, and was expected to slam into the coast of Isabela before dawn today.

Mina's approach threatened to pull Storm "Lando"—now swirling off Vietnam after cutting across the Visayas last week—back to the Philippines from the west in a waltz of two storms that has been called the "Fujiwhara effect."

"With the President's instructions to do a preemptive evacuation, we have witnessed one of the largest massive evacuations in Philippine history," Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro said at a press briefing in Camp Aguinaldo.

About 200,000 people were earlier taken out of harm's way in Bicol with the approach of Mina, while an estimated 100,000 people were ordered evacuated from coastal and flood-prone areas in Cagayan Valley.

Five people drowned and another was electrocuted due to floods set off by Mina in Camarines Norte, said Health Secretary Francisco Duque.

Approaching at 15 kph, Mina was forecast to blow across the mountainous

'MINA'/ A18

Bicol prayer power summoned against typhoon

By Joanna Los Baños and Bobby Labalan
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LEGAZPI CITY—CLIMATOLOGISTS MAY have the explanation for Typhoon "Mina" swinging away from Bicol last weekend, but to Bicolanos, the answer was simple enough: Mina veered because of the power of prayer.

For more than 48 hours, as Mina threatened the region with its center winds of 175 kilometers per hour, radio stations in Sorsogon City were swamped with text messages urging people to pray hard so that the howler would spare their province and the region.

In some areas, priests noticed a sudden jump in attendance at churches. In evacuation centers, people found comfort in reciting their rosaries.

Virginia Ayala, 61, an evacuee from the lahar-prone village of Padang, said it was a miracle Albay was spared. "I thank God for saving us," she said.

Auxiliary Bishop Lucilo Quiambao of the Archdiocese of Legazpi credited the power of prayer which proved "that God really sustains."

Fr. Rex Paul Arjona, chancellor of the Legazpi diocese, agreed that what happened was "sort of a miracle."

Arjona recalled that the typhoon was hardly moving last Friday but late

BICOL/ A21

2007 ARAW AWARDS EUGENE ARANETA

Dave Guerrero raises his arms in jubilation with his team from BBDO Guerrero Ortega, which was named "Agency of the Year" during the 2007 Araw Awards that capped the 20th Philippine Advertising Congress held at the Subic Bay Convention Center. The firm amassed 80 awards or nearly double the count of its closest rival.

3rd Bush ally falls from power

Program of change wins in Australia

By Amando Doronila

ANALYSIS

CANBERRA—AUSTRALIA'S OPposition Labor Party was swept to power via a landslide in Saturday's parliamentary elections that threw out the 11-year conservative rule of Prime Minister John Howard's Liberal-Na-

PROGRAM/ A8

SYDNEY—AUSTRALIA ENtered a new political era on Sunday following the election of a Chinese-speaking former diplomat as its first new prime minister in more than a decade and the humiliating loss of four-term leader John Howard.

The stunning victory of Labor Party leader Kevin Rudd swings Australia toward the political left after almost 12 years of conservative rule and marks a generational shift that is expected to result in a greater focus on issues such as global warming.

The defeat of Howard, 60, followed the exits from power of Spain's Jose Maria Aznar and Britain's Tony Blair—three prime ministers who were US President George W. Bush's staunchest allies in the invasion of Iraq and the war on terror.

Rudd, 50, campaigned on a platform of new leadership to address broad concerns about the environment, health and education. He promised to push for the ratification of the Kyoto agreement on reducing green-

3RD BUSH/ A8

DISCONNECTS IN EDUCATION

System-wide solutions needed, not band-aids

By Juan Miguel Luz

(First of three parts)

COMMENTARY

(Editor's note: The writer is president of the global NGO International Institute of Rural Reconstruction and former undersecretary of education. This series evolved from his presentation at a recent education seminar sponsored by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation and the National Policy Institute of the Liberal Party.)

EDUCATION IS A LONG-TERM PLAY WITH no quick fixes. If we want to turn around our poorly performing education system, we need to look at system-wide solutions—not band-aids—that can impact positively on all schools at reasonable cost.

This is all about returning to the basics: Reading, writing and arithmetic—the three Rs—in the early years, solid math and science in the middle years, and a balance of academic and technical/vocational education in the higher years.

This isn't about looking for a silver bullet to solve the problems of poor education (e.g., cyber education) or just dealing with classroom, furniture or textbook shortages. It has to be about changing the way we structure learning and how we manage schooling. It is about quality outcomes first

SYSTEM-WIDE/ A19

AUGUST DELA CRUZ

A SECOND grader at Miriam College learns about computers.

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Second FrontPage

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MAGKAKAISA NA KAYA TAYO NYAN?

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Northern and Eastern Luzon, The provinces of Catanduanes, Camarines Norte, Northern Quezon, Nueva Ecija and Polilio Island will experience stormy weather. Albay, Camarines Sur, Rest of Quezon, Laguna, Rizal, Bulacan, Pampanga, Tarlac, Zambales and Batanes Group of Islands will have rains and gusty winds and the coastal waters along these areas will be moderate to rough. The rest of Southern Luzon and Northern part of Visayas will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of Visayas and Mindanao will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	**Iloilo/Bacolod**	Cloudy with Rains
Baguio	Stormy	**Roxas**	Cloudy with Rains
Tuguegarao	Stormy	**Cebu**	Cloudy with Rains
Laoag	Stormy	**Tacloban**	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Gusty Winds	**Gen. Santos**	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	**Zamboanga**	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Gusty Winds	**Cagayan de Oro**	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Cloudy with Rains	**Davao**	Partly Cloudy

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Puno bats for 'healing' justice

'Restorative' system not about 'eye for an eye' but reconciliation

WHAT'S INSIDE

COA UNCOVERS another gov't project bleeding RP coffers dry /A4

DID US KEEP its RP envoy in dark about bases? /A9

NACIONALISTA Party marks centennial /A10

By DJ Yap

CHIEF JUSTICE REYNATO S. Puno yesterday outlined the sad state of criminal justice in the Philippines and urged a shift from the old concept of punishment and retribution to a more "restorative" system of justice.

In a speech on Friday in Makati City, Puno identified the worst problems facing criminal offenders, or even those only suspected of committing a crime: Protracted trials, prolonged resolution of cases, lack of legal representation, lack of judges, congestion in jails, and lack of opportunity to reform and rehabilitate the offender.

In Puno's view, it is high time to dispense with the age-old philosophy of "an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth."

The chief magistrate believes justice is no longer about punishment and retribution. Rather, it is about restoring the peace, repairing and preventing harm, and above all healing both the victim and the offender.

"This is called restorative justice," Puno said in his speech as the guest speaker at the launch of five film documentaries on the state of Philippine jails made by independent filmmakers and produced by international foundations.

Retributive justice can best be exemplified in the biblical passage: "Life shall be given for life; an eye for an eye; a tooth for a tooth; hand for hand; foot for foot," he said.

"Here, punishing the offender seems to be the end of justice with deterrence of crime a mere incident to it," he said.

But there is now a paradigm shift in the approach toward crime and criminals, Puno said.

Modern age

"With the advent of modern age and liberalism, the concept of justice that is based on punishment is slowly being replaced by one that focuses on repatriation and reconciliation," he said.

"Our penal institutions are the way they are, that is, designed for incarceration and punishment because our penal laws are founded on the philosophy of retributive justice," he said.

But with restorative justice, the focus shifts toward reinstating the losses of victims, holding wrongdoers accountable for the offenses they commit, and engendering peace within the community.

Puno said the five documentaries, which were shown during the launch, were examples of how the community, in this case the community of artists, could help facilitate restorative justice.

"(The films) exemplify justice not only to victim and society but to the offender as well," he said.

Directed by independent artists and filmmakers Gang Badoy, Pepe Diokno, Lourd de Veyra and Tado Jimenez, the documentaries were produced by The Asia Foundation, the United States Agency for International Development, Lawyers' League for Liberty and Rock Ed Philippines.

Of the other problems Puno cited, "congestion appears to be the most serious," he said.

"Except for the Makati jail, we have extreme congestion in various city jails in Metro Manila," he said.

Puno said it was no secret that even the courts were heavily congested.

"As of July 2007, it's estimated that the Philippines has a population of 91 million. The latest figure from the Office of the Court Administrator is that this number of people is served only by 2,182 courts, of which 21.63 percent are still vacant," he said.

Protestant churches assail gov't corruption

By Leila B. Salaverria

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES in the Philippines (NCCP) has voiced its disgust over the worsening corruption in the country that is prevalent even in the highest levels of government.

Government leaders have lost their moral ascendancy to lead the nation, the NCCP said in a statement during its 22nd General Convention held on Nov. 21 - 24 in Quezon City.

The NCCP cited examples such as the handing out of supposed cash gifts to lawmakers and local government officials at Malacañang, the cancellation of World Bank loans for road projects as a result of alleged irregularities, and the $329-million contract for the National Broadband Network (NBN) project with China's ZTE Corp. that has since been shelved.

13 million members

The NCCP represents around 13 million people belonging mainly to Protestant churches. It is comprised of 10 member churches and 10 service-oriented organizations.

It counts as members the Episcopal Church in the Philippines, Iglesia Filipina Independiente, United Church of Christ in the Philippines, United Methodist Church, Lutheran Church in the Philippines, Association of Christian Schools, Colleges and Universities, and the Philippine Bible Society.

The NCCP said it had spoken out against corruption in government during its 21st General Convention in 2004. But three years later, things had gotten worse and had led to the erosion of the people's trust in government.

Same problems

"The NCCP expressed grave concern over the large-scale stealing of public funds by those in government at the time and took to task the Arroyo administration for an honest-to-goodness campaign against graft and corruption in high places and to prosecute offenders," said the statement.

"Fast-forward to 2007 and the 22nd general convention, we see the same administration faced with the same problems, but this time in brazen proportions. The stakes have become higher and the money trail has led to the steps of the highest office in the land," it said.

The NCCP also noted that the scandals involving huge amounts of money came at a time many Filipinos were impoverished. It lamented that bribery and corrupt acts "continue to be the glaring manifestations of a moral decadence under the present administration."

The corrupt acts are linked to the President's desire to keep her seat amid calls for her to step down, it said.

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3 new AIDS cases bring total to 776

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH DATA on AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome) cases in the Philippines showed three new cases reported in the month of September.

The DOH report said this brought the number of known AIDS cases in the country to 776, up slightly from 770 in August.

According to the data, 25 people were reported to be HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) positive in September and three progressed to AIDS (or stage 4 of the HIV infection). All three were male.

Also, of the 25 found positive with the HIV virus in September, 92 percent were men and 2 percent were women.

AIDS data in the Philippines gathered since 1984 showed patients are predominantly male representing 66 percent of 2,965 patients found to be HIV-positive to date.

More than half of those found to be HIV positive, or 58 percent, are in the 25-39 age group.

The DOH data also showed that sexual transmission was still the main mode of transmission of the deadly disease in the country. Of the 25 HIV-positive patients in September, 24 reported getting the virus through sexual contact.

Since 1984, 2,595 of the 2,965 HIV-positive patients got the AIDS virus via sexual transmission.

In September, six overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) were found to be positive for the HIV virus. *Beverly T. Natividad*

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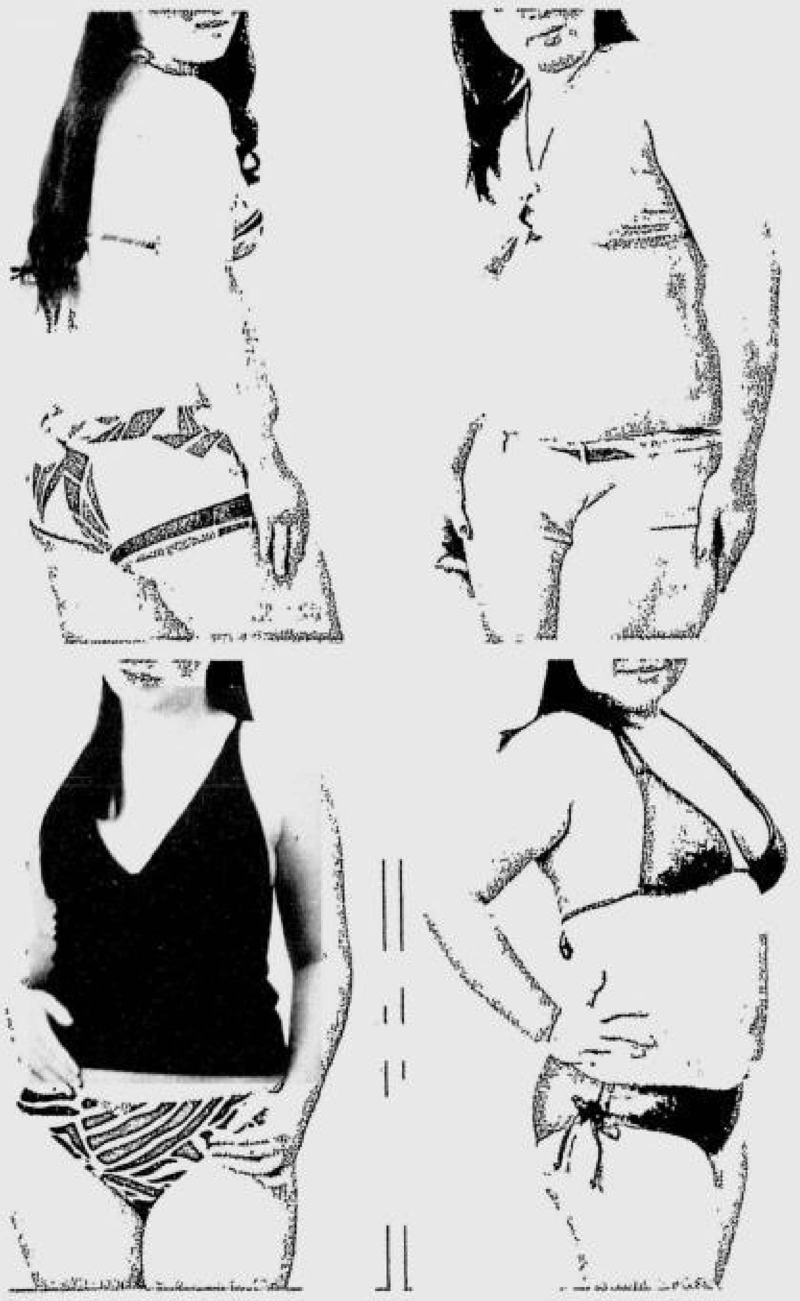

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COA uncovers another project bleeding RP dry

By Jocelyn R. Uy

THE P1.37-BILLION EMERgency Network Philippines (ENP) project funded by the Austrian government four years ago is bleeding the national coffers dry, although it has yet to be fully implemented.

This was revealed in the latest Commission on Audit (COA) report on the Department of Interior and Local Government.

An expansion of DILG's Patrol 117 Street Watch Program, the project would provide 16 regional call centers nationwide with "advanced, state-of-the-art" communication and relay equipment system to prevent, control and manage crimes, disasters and calamities.

But in its 2006 audit report, the COA noted that while funds had not been provided in the DILG's budget to put the project into full operation, the national government continued to pay the commitment fees and interest for the project at an average of P69 million annually.

As of Dec. 31 last year, the government had paid a total of P271,682,171.56 in fees and "increasing interest expenses" since the loan was availed of in 2002.

"The national government will be paying approximately P69 million in interest annually until repayment of the principal loan starts at which point interest payments will gradually decrease," the report said.

The COA found that of the 16 call centers, only four were "fully operational" even after the ENP project was completed and accepted in October 2004.

These call centers are in Metro Manila, which started operating a year before the implementation of the ENP project. The call centers in Puerto Princesa City, Zamboanga City and Batangas started functioning only in December 2006.

Former Finance Secretary Jose Isidro Camacho, in behalf of the government, entered into a credit facility agreement with Raiffeisen Zentralbank Osterreich Aktiengesellschaft in Austria in the amount of euro 23,989,986.00 to finance the project, the report said.

With the approval of the agreement, the DILG entered into a supply memorandum agreement with Frequentis Nachrichtentechnik Gesellschaft for other equipment worth over P9 million for the 16 call centers. The equipment include printers, scanners, fax machines, laptops and cellular phones.

The COA noted that these supplies were "not dependent on the communication system to function" and their speedy deliveries increased the government's expense on the loan by as much as P14 million in terms of interest charges.

In its 2005 audit report, the COA had recommended that the DILG formulate a specific course of action to maximize the use of the ENP equipment.

ARTS, CRAFTS, EXPO. Vice President Noli de Castro and Tourism Secretary Joseph Ace Durano examine crystal figurines and jars at the China pavilion at the First International Arts and Crafts Expo of the Asean Handicraft Promotion and Development Association at the SMX Convention Center in Pasay City. Twenty-two countries participated in the expo which ended yesterday. With them are pavilion assistant Zhang Nai Ren (left) and former Tourism Secretary Mina T. Gabor, APHADA president.

Telecom firm wins P17-M tax case vs Pasig City gov't

By Leila B. Salaverria

ERICSSON TELECOMMUNICAtions Inc. has won its tax suit against the Pasig City government after the Supreme Court reinstated a regional trial court's ruling canceling the more than P17 million business tax deficiency assessed by the local government.

In ruling for the telecommunication firm, the high tribunal said the tax assessments made by the Pasig government were based on the wrong kind of data—the gross revenue.

The high court said the business tax assessments against Ericsson should have been based on gross receipts.

Gross receipts include money or its equivalent that has actually or constructively been received in exchange for services rendered or articles sold, exchanged or leased.

On the other hand, gross income or revenue refers to money actually or constructively received, including the value of services rendered or articles sold, exchanged or leased, the payment of which is yet to be received.

In this case, Ericsson's audited financial statements, on which the tax assessment was based, reflected income it was entitled to receive during the taxable period, even though it has not yet been paid the amount.

Hence, the high court said, taxing Ericsson based on gross revenue could lead to taxing the private firm twice for the same transaction.

"The imposition of the local business tax based on petitioner's gross revenue will inevitably result in the constitutionally proscribed double taxation—taxing of the same person twice by the same jurisdiction for the same thing—inasmuch as petitioner's revenue or income for a taxable year will definitely include its gross receipts already reported during the previous year and for which local business tax has already been paid," the court said in its Nov. 22 decision.

It also pointed out that under the Local Government Code, Pasig City may impose a business tax on contractors based on gross receipts for the preceding calendar year. The Pasig Revenue Code also provides that the tax should be computed based on gross receipts, it added.

"Thus, respondent [Pasig City] committed a palpable error when it assessed petitioner's local business tax based on its gross revenue as reported in its audited financial statements," it said.

The Pasig City government earlier asked Ericsson to pay business taxes based on its gross revenues for the years 1997 and 1998, and 2000 and 2001.

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Ban urged on realistic toy guns

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

A RANKING GOVERNMENT OFficial has urged that toy guns that look like the real thing be banned.

Citing police records, Senate President Manuel Villar said replicas of high-powered guns had been known to have been used in some crimes.

"Sadly the season of merry-making always comes with a rise in crime statistics and the availability of these toy guns will not help make the figures go down," he said.

He said that at a night market near the Senate Compound in Pasay City, a .45-cal. pistol look-alike can be bought for only P150. Toy Armalites and shotguns can be had for from P300 to P500 each while a rechargeable Armalite is available for P1,200.

He called on the Philippine National Police to regulate the sale of such toy guns.

Villar has filed Senate Resolution 221 urging the committees on public order and illegal drugs, and on trade and commerce, to conduct an inquiry into the proliferation of realistic-looking toy guns.

The resolution also called for an inquiry in aid of legislation into substandard products that pose a danger to consumers.

Villar said faulty and substandard products not only proliferate in sidewalk shops but in big expensive stores.

A member of his staff had bought Christmas lights from a known bookstore that exploded after they were plugged in, he said.

He said the packages of such substandard products bear fake quality control markings such as the import clearance certificate (ICC).

"Tampering [with] and illegally using ICC marks is a serious violation which could harm people and claim lives. Certainly it must not go unpunished," he said.

Villar urged the Department of Trade and Industry to conduct unannounced inspections of stores, especially during the Christmas season.

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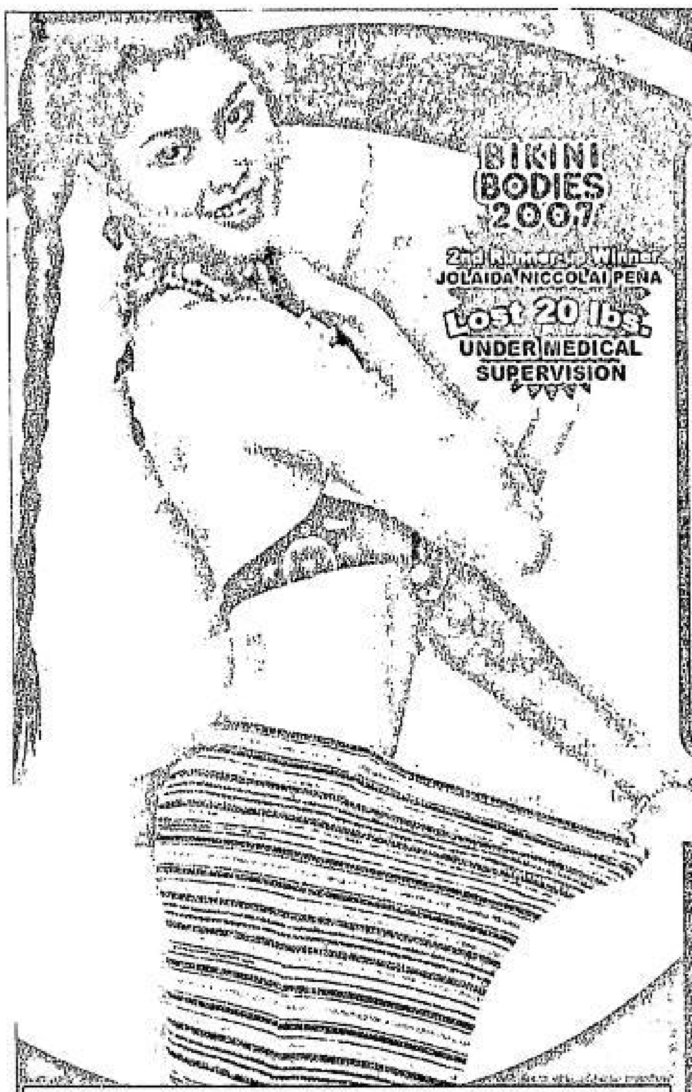

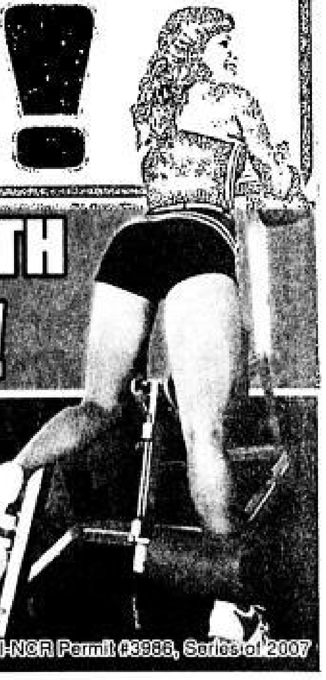

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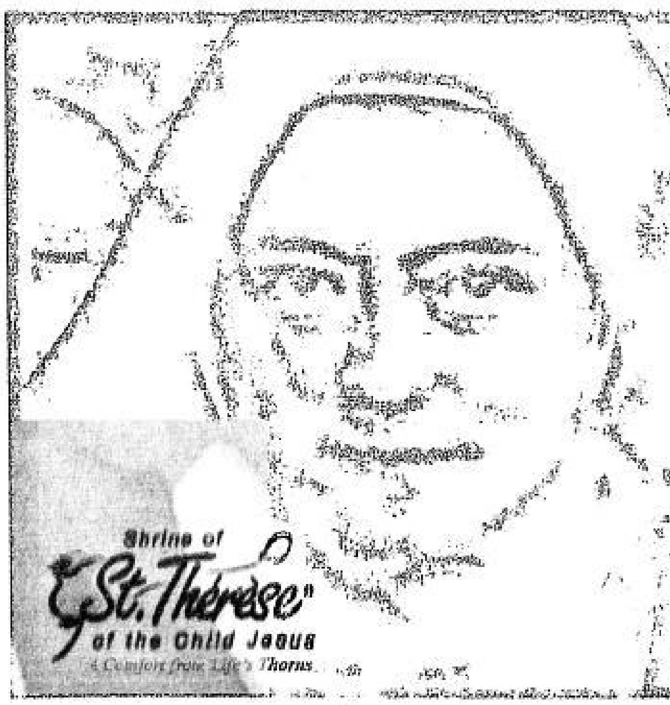
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Airports gird for heightened holiday traffic

By Tarra Quismundo

EXPECTING A RISE IN AIR TRAVEL this holiday season, aviation authorities have implemented measures to ease passenger woes in Manila's airports, from doubling entrance queues to strictly keeping out non-passengers from immigration and customs counters.

The Manila International Airport Authority (Miaa) expects less queuing at departure gates at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) Terminals 1 and 2 and the Manila Domestic Airport as officials recently doubled entry lines into the terminals.

Two passengers at a time may now enter the terminals as Miaa has doubled its security personnel for the routine check of passports and travel documents, operations officers said. The measure was implemented this month to prevent long queues during peak hours.

Miaa General Manager Alfonso Cusi has also restricted the issuance of non-passenger access passes to the arrival lobby and check-in counters.

"In anticipation [of] the increase in passengers this coming [Christmas] season, issuance of access and visitors passes to well-wishers and greeters shall be limited to the arrival lobby and check-in counters only," Cusi said in a memo dated Nov. 19.

"Immigration and customs areas shall strictly be for passengers and airport personnel performing jobs and functions directly related to these areas," the directive said.

Miaa had been granting access privileges to allow well-wishers to go up to the immigration and customs areas to assist relatives or friends leaving or returning to the country. A fee of P50 is charged for each access pass.

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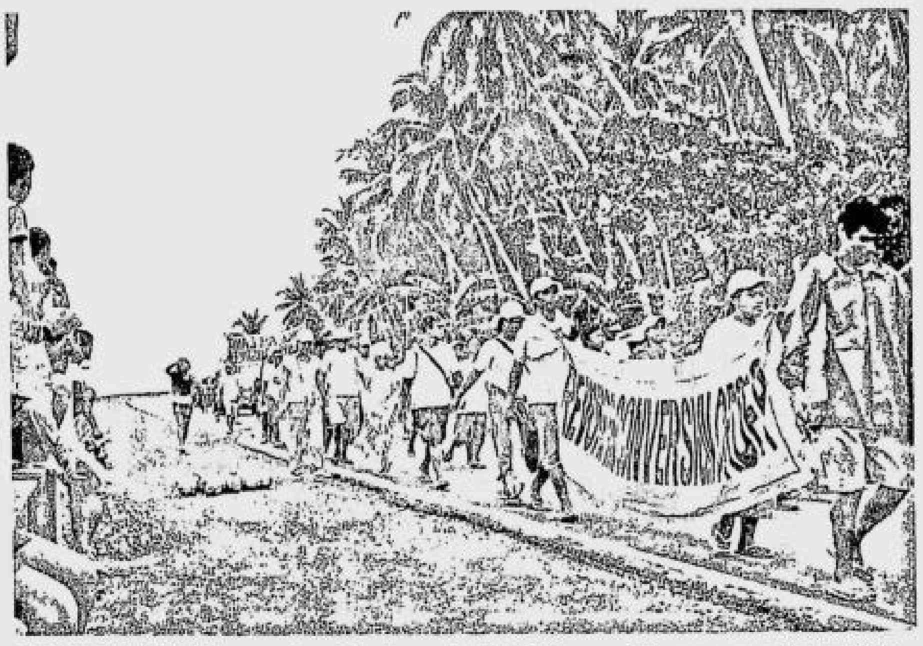


THE PROTESTING farmers from Sumilao make it to Atimonan, Quezon, more than halfway in their long quest for justice from Malacañang. DELFIN MALLARI JR., INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

Protesting tillers vow march around Palace

By Delfin T. Mallari Jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon

ATIMONAN, QUEZON—FIFTY-five farmers from Sumilao, Bukidnon, arrived here yesterday on the 46th day of their 1,700-km march to Malacañang, where they hope to bring their demand to reclaim their ancestral land directly to President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Tired and weary but visibly in high spirits, the marchers composed of Higaonon tribe members—15 of them women—stopped at the side of the Atimonan Bypass Road and shared a breakfast of biscuits and coffee.

They proceeded to the Barangay hall of Malinao Ilaya, where they did stretching exercises before settling down for the night.

Led by the Mapalad Multi-Purpose Cooperative, they will tackle the 31-km stretch to Lucena City today.

The marchers, who began their "Walk for Sumilao Land, Walk for Justice" from their upland Mindanao settlement on Oct. 10., will end their 60-day protest in front of Malacañang on Dec. 10, International Human Rights Day.

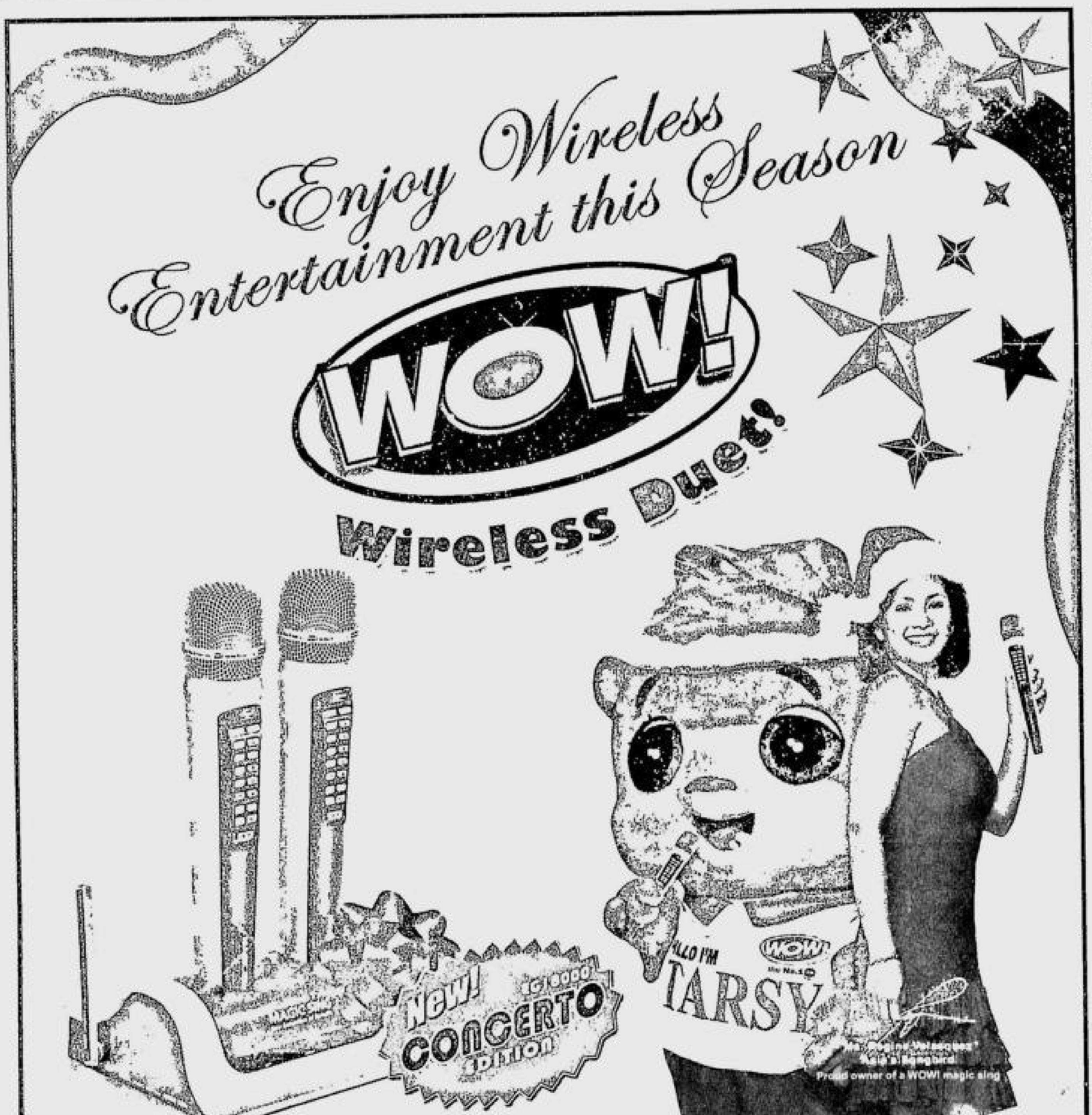
"If President Arroyo will not see us, we will not stop marching around the Malacañang area. We will continue until we achieve justice for our struggle. No one can stop our march," Mapalad cooperative president Samuel "To-to" Merida told the INQUIRER here.

The group wants to dramatize the farmers' 10-year struggle to reclaim a 144-hectare area that was awarded to 137 of their members in 1997 by the Department of Agrarian Reform. The government, however, subsequently voided their certificates of land ownership award and returned the land to the Quisumbing family after their application for the conversion of the property into an agro-industrial site was approved.

The farmers claim the agro-industrial projects touted by the Norberto Quisumbing Sr. Management and Development Corp.—including a golf course, executive training school and cultural center—never materialized. Part of it was sold to San Miguel Foods but much of the land remains idle, according to the farmers.

"We staged this march in solidarity with the rest of the Filipino farmers in our common aspiration for a piece of land to own and till," Merida said.

Cita Esmao, president of Ugnayan ng Magsasaka sa Quezon (Ugma-Quezon), a local organization that organized sleeping quarters for the marchers, said the "pain and hardship of marching rain or shine 12 hours a day is reflective of the struggle of all Filipino farmers across the nation."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Grade, high schools equivalency tests set

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (DepEd) has scheduled the accreditation and equivalency (A&E) tests for elementary and high school levels under the Alternative Learning System (ALS) early next year, the department announced Sunday.

Director Carolina Guerrero of the Bureau of Alternative Learning System, said the tests will be divided into four "waves" and administered in 188 school divisions.

Guerrero said applicants in Mindanao will test on Feb. 3; followed by the Visayas and Bicol regions on Feb. 10.

The third wave will be for Regions 1, 2, 3 and the Cordillera Administrative Region on Feb. 17, and the fourth will be for Regions 4-A, 4-B and the National Capital Region on Feb. 24.

Registration ends this month. Applicants should submit two 1"x1" photos.

They are also required to submit one of the following original documents to the Test Registration Officer: Birth certificate, baptismal certificate, marriage certificate or driver's license.

The A&E test certificate is comparable to the elementary and high school diploma.

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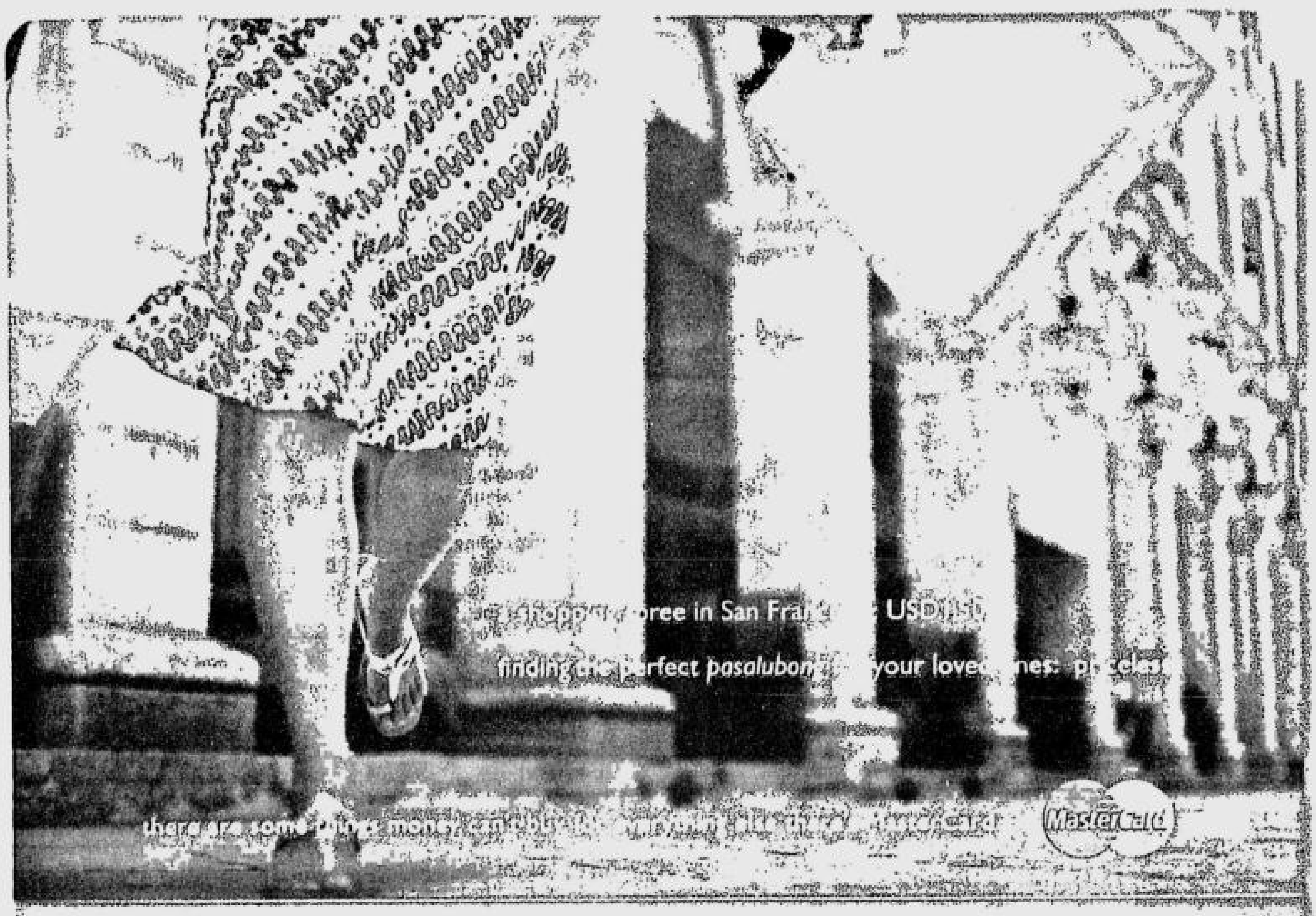

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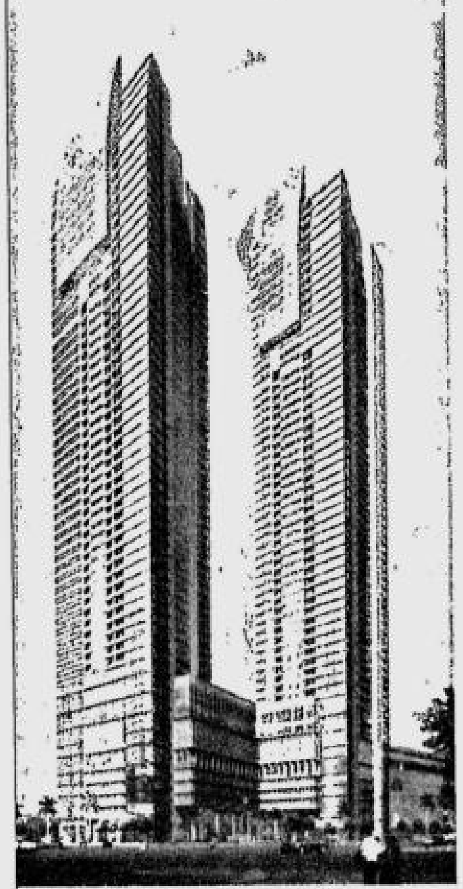

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GMA ally bidding for Transco scored

From page A1

by Jose Ibazeta as president.

Ibazeta, 64, has been a director since 1987 of International Container Terminal Services Inc. (ICTSI), whose chair is Razon, the senators said.

Ibazeta is also a board member of Razon's various domestic and international port subsidiaries and interests, they said.

In a phone interview, Pimentel said Ibazeta "should have inhibited himself from the transaction to avoid a conflict of interest."

"But I wonder though if Ibazeta has the moral gumption to do so. It is either that or Razon drops out of the whole thing. But I don't think Razon will back out and give up his chance to win this crown jewel," Pimentel said.

In a text message to the INQUIRER, Madrigal said: "It is unfortunate that the disease endemic to the Arroyo administration again manifested itself in the sale of Transco. She has appointed a person (Ibazeta) with a clear double conflict of interest, with ties to both Aboitiz and ICTSI to be in charge of the sale of Transco. (It's a) clear case of *lutong makaw*."

Madrigal was referring to another businessman close to Ms Arroyo, Endika Aboitiz, whose family is a dominant power retailer in Mindanao and is barred from bidding for Transco under the 2001 Electric Power Industry Act.

Madrigal called Ms Arroyo's appointment of Ibazeta "unpatriotic and unethical" considering that the sale of Transco "to benefit vested interests of big business" was detrimental to the interest of the Filipino people.

Reached by the INQUIRER last night, Ibazeta angrily declined to comment until the "appropriate time."

Ibazeta is a childhood friend of the third-generation Sorianos as his father had been a trusted executive of the late Andres Soriano Sr., patriarch of the San Miguel conglomerate.

He was first named by President Arroyo as a special envoy to Middle East countries in charge of coordinating humanitarian and reconstruction efforts related to Iraq in April 2003. He was appointed PSALM head in February.

Razon has been implicated in the $329-million National Broadband Network (NBN) deal as among the businessman close to Ms Arroyo who were aggressively lobbying for the contract to wire the nation's bureaucracy digitally.

Razon, who served as treasurer of the administration coalition Team Unity in the last elections, was not immediately available for comment for this story as well.

Businessman Jose de Venecia III, namesake son of the Speaker, blew the whistle on the broadband deal, saying it was overpriced and riddled with bribery.

The young De Venecia also has testified in a Senate inquiry that the President's husband had told him to "back off" from the deal. De Venecia III lost out in the broadband deal.

The bidding for Transco is seen as a historic opportunity to build a business empire. The winner is expected not only to rule the country's power industry but also potentially dominate the telecommunications business with the fiber optic lines embedded in the power lines.

One business observer compared the significance of the Transco bid to the years before the expiration in 1974 of the Laurel-Langley Agreement that gave Americans the right to exploit Philippine resources in the same manner as Filipinos.

As Americans unloaded their holdings, the Cojuangco group acquired Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. from US General Telephone (GTE) for $14 million and the Lopez family got Manila Electric Co. from General Public Utilities for $60 million.

It is this double-barrel potential of Transco which has lured the La Costa group led by former Finance Secretary Roberto de Ocampo and nickel miner Salvador Zamora II to bid as much as $6 billion for Transco or double the $3 billion offered by lone bidder for the Transco auction in February.

The group's consultants took the privatization of the national grid of the United Kingdom as its model wherein the private owners took advantage of the fiber optics in the transmission cables all over the country to provide broader and clearer telecommunication services.

The power transmission firm formed National Grid Wireless, which has become one of the UK's leading providers of large-scale transmission infrastructure to the providers of wireless communications services.

The De Ocampo-Zamora tandem believed that this convergence model would be more profitable than the core transmission business itself.

The La Costa group has sued Psalm and Ibazeta for "foul play" after it was disqualified from the Dec. 12 Transco bidding. "A deal of this magnitude must be attended by fair play and transparency," De Ocampo said.

Only four bidders were prequalified for Transco's upcoming bidding.

Aside from the Razon group, the other bidders are Ramon Ang's San Miguel Energy with US-based TPG Aurora B.V. and TNB Pari Sdn. Bhd. of Malaysia as partners; PLDT chair Manuel V. Pangilinan's Metro Pacific Investment Corp. with Italy's Terna-Rete Elettrica Nazionale S.p.A as partner; and Ricardo Delgado's Citadel Holdings Inc. with Power Grid of India as partner. *With a report from Abigail L. Ho*

Program of change wins in Australia

From page A1

tional coalition government.

The center-left avalanche propelled Labor leader Kevin Rudd to power as Australia's 26th prime minister in one of the biggest swings against a sitting government since World War II.

The Labor victory rode on a 5.7-percent swing nationwide, allowing the opposition party to capture an expected 85 seats to the coalition's 57 seats in the 150-member Lower House of Parliament and giving Labor a majority of 25-28 seats.

Labor needed to win only a majority of 16 to form a new government. It won 53.9 percent of the national vote, representing a bigger victory than that won by Labor leader Bob Hawke in 1983.

The landslide exceeded Labor's expectation. Rudd's party delivered an ignominious defeat to Howard, who is likely to lose his Sydney seat of Bennelong to Labor's Maxime McKew, a former Australian Broadcasting Corp. journalist.

Howard, the longest-serving Australian prime minister after Sir Robert Menzies, had held Bennelong for 33 years and had won four consecutive elections since 1996 when the Labor government of Prime Minister Paul Keating was ousted from power.

Supreme humiliation

If Howard suffers a defeat in his electorate, that would be the supreme humiliation. That would earn him the distinction of being the second Australian sitting prime minister who had lost in his electorate since the Great Depression in 1927 when Stanley Bruce, also of the conservative Liberal Party, was defeated. In 1929, conservatives lost power over the issue of industrial unrest as a result of Bruce's conflict with unions.

Howard's defeat in Bennelong would mark the first time the electorate would go to Labor in 33 years, underlining the extent of the repudiation of Howard, whose record the past 11 years in government was the focus of what was regarded a referendum of his conservative coalition government.

Howard's defeat was particularly galling and full of irony in that it took place when Australia was in the midst of an economic boom, low inflation and high employment.

Exit polls showed voters preferred Howard over Rudd on the issue of economic management. The conventional wisdom here is a sitting government loses power only during economic distress. Not this time.

Time for change

These circumstances underline the point highlighted by Rudd. It was time for change from the tired government of Howard, 68, to a younger generation exemplified by Rudd, a former diplomat and 50 years of age.

In their TV debates, Howard looked tired. He emphasized three decades of more of the same economic and social policies in a campaign that locked the Australian voters into the past and offered no new initiatives. Rudd offered a vision for the future and addressed it to the younger generation of voters.

The labor landslide began to unfold in just an hour after the close of the polling stations at 6 p.m. (8 p.m. in the Philippines). By 8 p.m., with 50 percent of the votes counted, the National Tally room in Canberra showed that Labor was leading with a 5-percent swing nationwide.

The quickness of the count was amazing, if not frustrating to observers of Philippine elections, in which official results are not known until after more than a month.

Howard phoned Rudd to concede defeat at 8 p.m. and minutes afterward, he appeared at Wentworth Hotel in Sydney with his family to concede defeat. He wished Rudd well.

"This a great democracy. There is no prouder job that anybody can occupy than being prime minister of this country," Howard said, adding Australia was now "stronger and prouder and more prosperous" than when he had first been elected prime minister in 1996.

For all Australians

In Brisbane, Queensland, Rudd's home state, the new leader pledged to govern for all Australians.

"History has given us a chance to shape the future. Let us be the generation that seizes the opportunity of today to invest in the Australia of tomorrow. That's the mission statement as the next government, but I want us to do it all working together as one," Rudd said.

He cited the divides as those between unions and business, growth and environment, public and private ownership, and between the states and the Commonwealth. "It's time for a new page to be written in our nation's history," Rudd said.

In throwing out the conservative coalition, voters crossed over to Labor on its program of change that emphasized the environment, the war in Iraq, industrial relations, the economy, and priorities on more health care facilities, and an education revolution. These were issues addressed to the young.

Rudd's economic philosophy did not differ much from the conservatives. Some analysts have commented that it was not correct to brand Rudd as a man of the Left.

Promises

Giving a hint on the policies of his government, Rudd promised to pull out Australia's 550 combat troops in Iraq in a phased withdrawal and to quickly sign the Kyoto Protocol that seeks to curb industrial greenhouse gas emissions.

Howard had been the staunchest ally of US President George W. Bush in the Pacific in the invasion and military occupation of Iraq and the war on Islamic-based terrorism.

Ratification of the Kyoto Protocol by Rudd's government would isolate the United States as the remaining industrialized country that had not ratified the treaty.

Bush's coalition of countries that had sent troops to Iraq has increasingly shrunk with the withdrawal of troops of such countries as Poland, Spain and Hungary.

Still, the White House congratulated Rudd on his victory. Its statement said: "The United States and Australia have long been strong partners and allies and the president looks forward to working with this new government to continue our historic relationship."

In the cards, however, is a shift in Australia's policy vis-à-vis Washington's policy on Iraq that is also being challenged by the Democratic-controlled US Congress.

3rd Bush ally ousted

From page A1

house gas emissions and negotiate the phased withdrawal of Australia's 500 troops from Iraq.

At his first news conference on Sunday, Rudd promised "action, and action now" on climate change and identified education, health and a high-speed Internet network as the other top priorities of his government.

Rudd said he would attend the United Nations meeting on global warming next month in Bali, Indonesia.

Mortifying end

Saturday's elections brought a sharp and mortifying end to the career of Howard, Australia's second-longest serving leader. He also looks likely to suffer the further embarrassment of losing his own seat in Parliament—only the second sitting prime minister in 106 years of federal government to suffer that fate.

Howard, who reshaped Australia's image abroad with his unwavering support for Bush's war in Iraq and on terrorism, had dominated Australia's political scene for 11 years but failed to read the signs that voters had grown tired of his rule.

Rudd said he planned to visit Washington next year, with the phased pullout of Australia's 550 combat troops from Iraq topping the agenda.

Aside from Iraq and Kyoto, the bulk of Australia's foreign, trade and economic policies are not expected to change much under Rudd.

"The Australian people have decided that we as a nation move forward," Rudd said in a victory speech late Saturday. "To embrace the future and together as Australians to unite and write a new page in our nation's history."

As Rudd basked in his victory, Howard's party fell almost immediately into turmoil, with Howard's nominated successor, outgoing Treasurer Peter Costello, announcing Sunday he would not accept the post of opposition leader.

The surprise announcement opens the possibility of a bruising fight for the leadership, with outgoing Foreign Minister Alexander Downer and former Environment Minister Malcolm Turnbull as the likely candidates.

Economic conservative

Rudd has pledged to govern as an "economic conservative," while pouring money into schools and universities. He will curtail sweeping industrial reforms Howard introduced that were widely perceived to hand bosses too much power.

Rudd attended a church service with his family on Sunday, and held a series of meetings with senior advisers. At his news conference in the northeast city of Brisbane, Rudd said Labor lawmakers would meet on Thursday, and he hoped that he and his ministers would be sworn in soon after that.

Few in Rudd's team have any federal government experience. It includes a former rock star—one-time Midnight Oil singer Peter Garrett—a former television presenter and a number of former union officials.

Howard took his customary early-morning walk along the Sydney Harbor foreshore, but did not commend on the election. Rudd told Howard that his family may take "as long as they need" to move out of the prime minister's official residences, including one with a stunning view of the Sydney Opera House.

With 75 percent of the more than 13.5 million ballots counted, Labor had won more than 53 percent and had secured at least 83 places in Parliament's 150-seat Lower House, according to official Australian Electoral Commission results on Sunday.

That was at least 23 seats more than the center-left Labor Party won at the last election in 2004—representing a huge swing in Australian political terms.

Howard's center-right Liberal-National coalition had 46.6 percent of the vote, and 47 parliamentary seats.

Howard's Sydney suburban district of Bennelong hung in the balance, with the final outcome to be decided by postal votes to be counted in the next few days. *AP*

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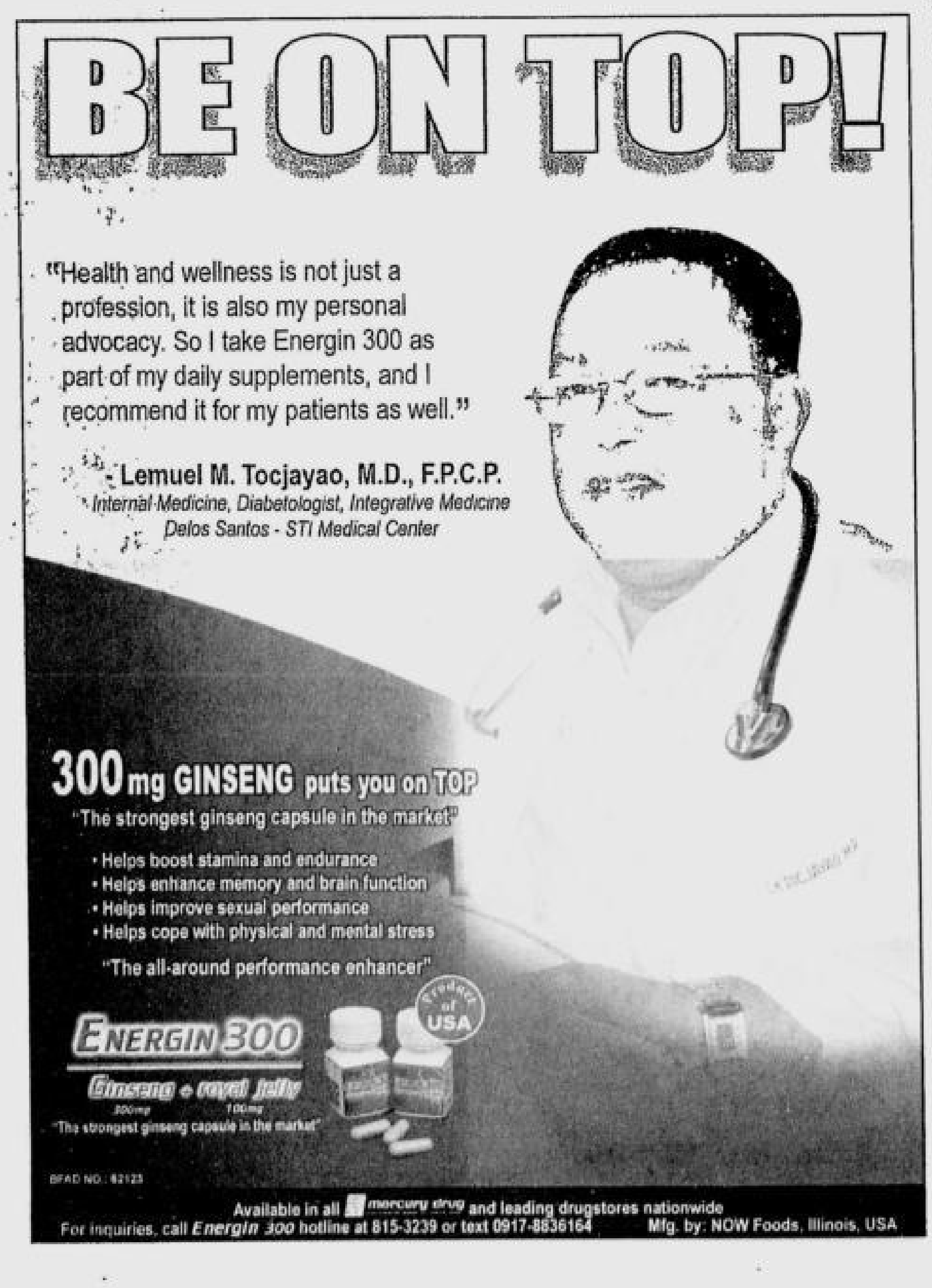

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Was US envoy kept in dark on bases?

By Julie Alipala
Inquirer Mindanao

ZAMBOANGA CITY—THE GOVERNMENT of the United States may have kept the existence of its military bases in the Philippines a secret even from its ambassador to the country, Kristie Kenney.

A member of the Thai think tank Focus on Global South, who conducted the research that became the basis for the group's report on the existence of US bases in the Philippines, said it appeared Kenney may have been purposely kept in the dark by her own government.

During a visit here on Thursday, Kenney denied the US had reestablished military bases in the country.

Herbert Docena said Kenney's denial contradicted the report of the US government's Overseas Basing Commission, also known as the Commission on Review of Overseas Military Facility Structures of the United States.

The commission was created by the US Congress to review the US military presence abroad.

Global presence

Docena said the information about the US developing "cooperative security locations" or CSLs, a euphemism for military bases, in the Philippines was published in the commission's final report that was submitted to President George W. Bush and the US Congress in May 2005.

He said Kenney's statement that the US did not "need bases" also contradicted publicly available official US documents that stressed the need for the United States to retain and expand its global military presence.

"Kenney, who admitted not having read our report yet, is either uninformed about her own government's actions or is deliberately misrepresenting their actions in the Philippines. In either case, her denial must be seen in light of the constitutional ban on foreign bases in the country. Simply put, any admission on her part could mean an end to US basing in the country," Docena said in an e-mail to the INQUIRER on Friday.

Revealing

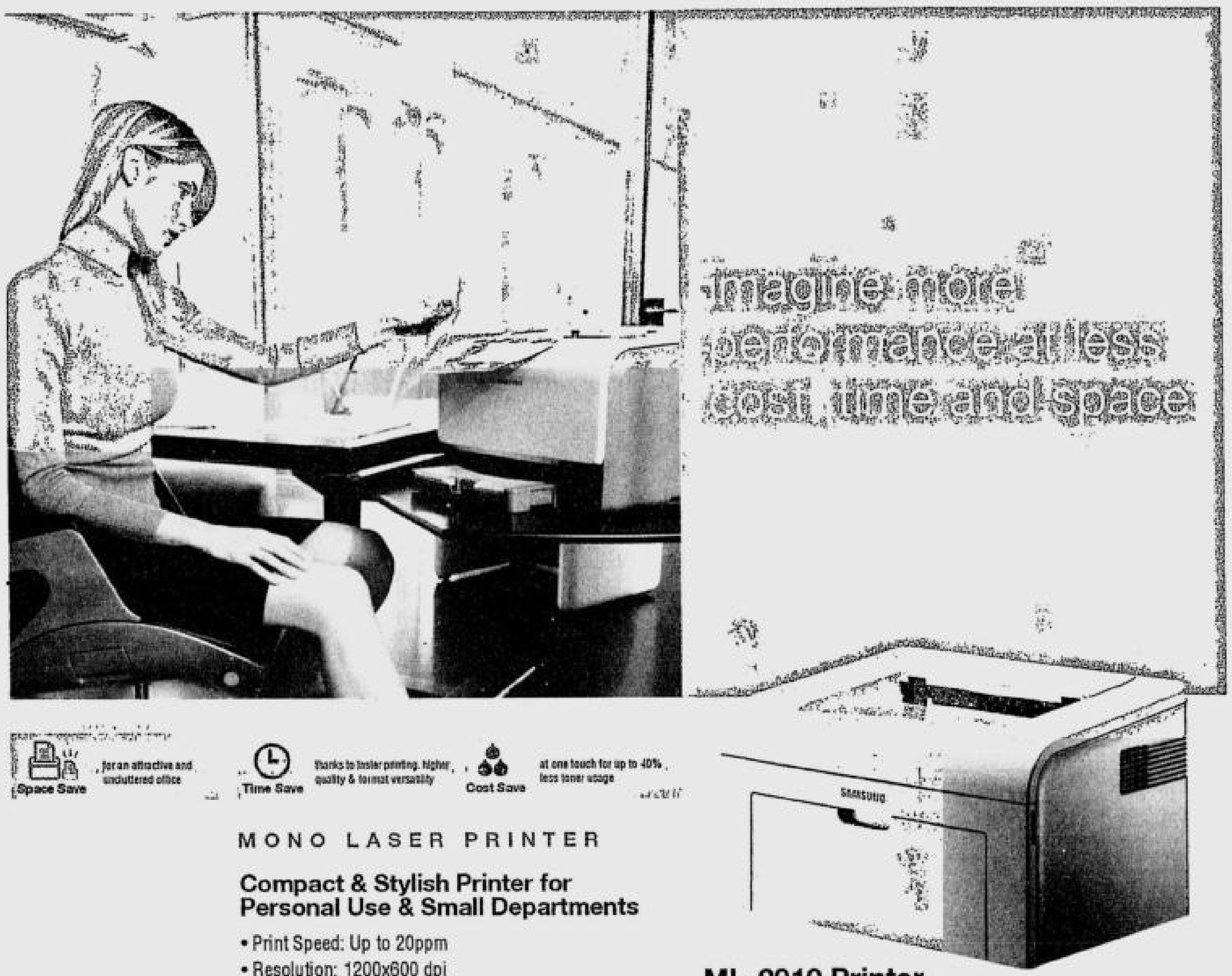
He said the wording of Kenney's denial was revealing.

Docena said that, technically, the US was "not building bases" because the CSLs were installations that may have already been built.

Among the locations the Focus report mentioned were Clark and Subic, both former US military bases in Luzon, and Mactan International Airport in the Visayas and General Santos City Airport in Mindanao.

"As the Pentagon's own definition of these facilities, CSLs may be existing military or private facilities that may nominally belong to the Philippine government or even to private contractors but which would be provided to the US for its use as needed," he said.

Docena said that aside from CSLs, the Focus report also pointed out that the US had installations in Mindanao which US troops themselves called "forward operating bases" or "advance operating bases."



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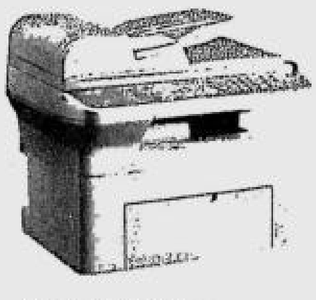

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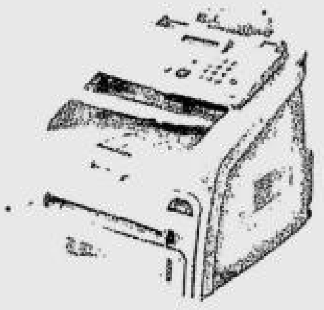

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Nacionalistas mark 100 years

SENATE PRESIDENT Manuel Villar will lead the Nacionalista Party's celebration of its centennial that is expected to gather past and present members of the party on Wednesday.

The celebration will include the launch of the book titled "Building the Nation: First 100 Years, Nacionalista Party 1907-2007" authored by Carmelo and Joyce Crisanto at the Philippine International Convention Center in Pasay City.

Villar, concurrent NP president, said the book "will explore the early days of the Nacionalista Party to the present, how the party flourished and struggled through the days of glory and trials of the Filipino people in building the nation in the last century."

VILLAR

The NP, the country's oldest political party, is recognized as the most enduring political party not only in the Philippines but also in Asia.

Villar said he hoped the book would serve as an inspiration and a guidebook for future Filipino political leaders. He called on the Filipino people "to follow the lead of Nacionalista leaders, keeping in mind their responsibility as public servants and practitioners of change."

"As public servants, we should keep in mind our motto—Ang Bayan Higit sa Lahat (The Nation Above all Else)—as we continue to take up our responsibility to provide a better future for our people," Villar said.

The occasion will also see the launch of NP's Centennial Gift of P100,000 for individuals or organizations "who want to build a business and serve the community." Conceived by Villar, the initiative aims to promote entrepreneurship as a way to combat poverty in the country.

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P30B available next year for housing, says Noli

By Cynthia D. Balana

VICE PRESIDENT NOLI DE CASTRO ON Saturday announced the allocation of P30 billion for home financing next year from the Home Mutual Development Fund (HDMF) or Pag-Ibig Fund.

Speaking at the launch of the Fiesta Communities at the Fontana Convention Center in Pampanga, De Castro said the fund would benefit all Pag-Ibig members, particularly those from the low-income and middle-income levels.

"Pag-Ibig has a fat budget for home financing next year and I hope Pag-Ibig members will take advantage of this," said De Castro, who is also chair of the Housing and Urban Housing Coordinating Council (HUDCC).

Aside from the new fund, De Castro reiterated that adjusted interest rates and a maximum repayment period of 30 years would make house acquisition more affordable.

"So this is really the best time to own your dream house. I urge all Pag-Ibig members to take this opportunity," he said.

"As I have been saying time and again, these reforms would not be meaningful if we did not have the inventories to meet the growing demand," he said.

De Castro said the government was serious about helping the housing sector grow by fast-tracking the processing of business permits and licenses of qualified developers.

He revealed that the one-stop shop of the Housing and Land Use Regulatory Board (HLURB) for housing permits will be operational by yearend.

The government has shortened the waiting period for certificates of registration and licenses to sell from two weeks to five days from the completion of the publication requirement, he said.

The HUDCC is conducting a new inventory of the country's housing backlog. An inventory conducted in 2005 showed a national backlog of 1.4 million units.

Diwata creates largest ring

TAGUM CITY—THE mining village of Mt. Diwata in Compostela Valley is minting a gold ring that will weigh one kilo and symbolize the "peace and unity" that the gold-rich community has attained after years of bloodshed over the gold.

Dubbed the "solidarity ring," the huge piece of jewelry would also show that Diwata, more commonly known as Diwalwal, was no longer the nation's version of the "wild, wild West" but was a mountain of wealth and opportunity, Franco Tito, the village chief, said.

Tito, leader of Diwalwal's more than 40,000 residents, said Friday the raw materials for the ring project, which would cost P1 million, would come from miners, businessmen and even former warring politicians.

Tito did not say what the ring's purity would be in terms of carats – the international grading system for gold and other precious metals – but that it might be included in the Guinness Book of Records as the biggest and heaviest gold ring.

The ring will be the main feature in the first Bulawan (Gold) Festival to be held during the province's founding anniversary on March 7-14, an employee at the Compostela Valley tourism office said.

The tourism office has come up with the ring's design which will be unveiled soon.

Tito said the community had collected 290 grams of refined gold so far.

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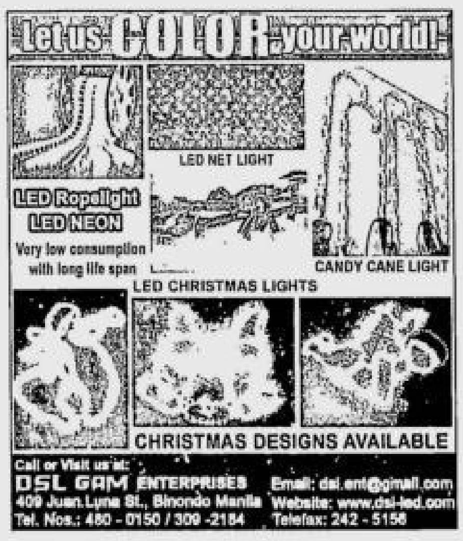
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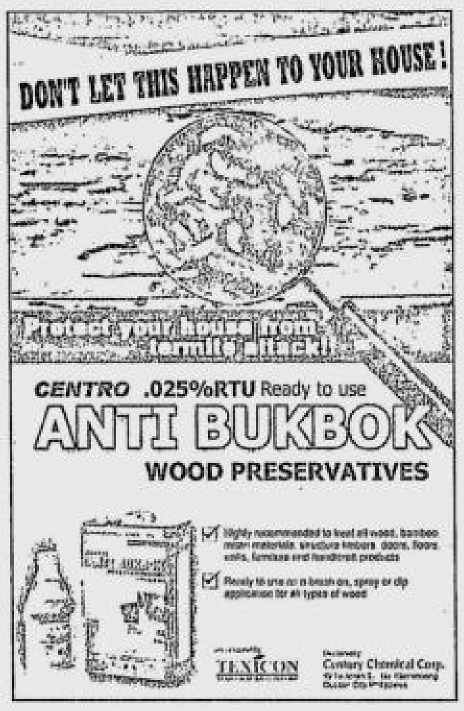
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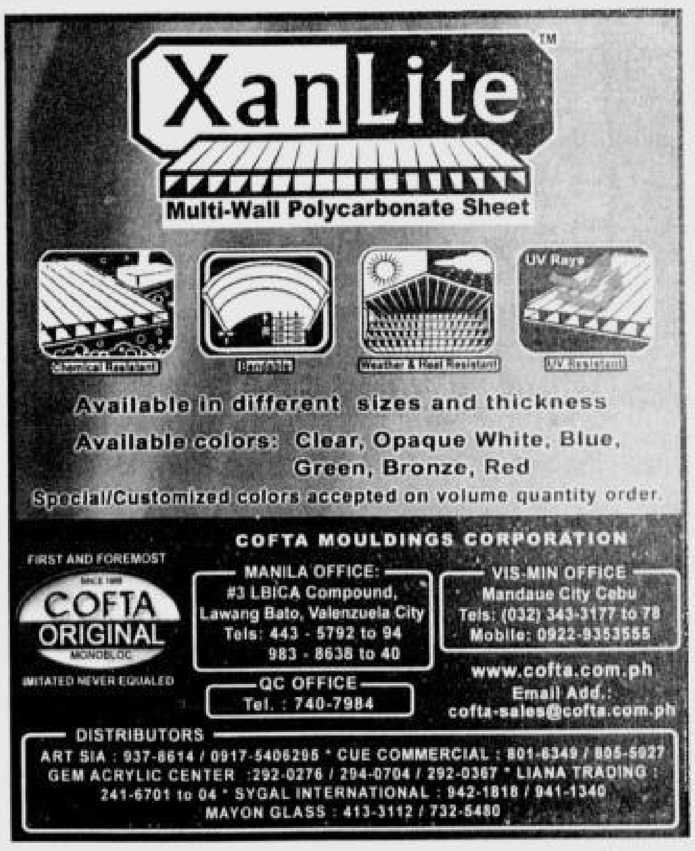
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Atienza: Global warming not population's fault

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—GLOBAL warming and urban decay cannot be blamed on overpopulation, Environment Secretary Lito Atienza said here Saturday.

Atienza made the assertion during a tree-planting activity at the Camp John Hay forest reservation to jump-start a counter-global warming campaign.

A former Manila mayor, Atienza relaunched the Department of Environment and Natural Resources program called "Tree for Life," which aimed to plant 10 million trees throughout the country.

He, however, is batting for the planting and nurturing of 50 million trees before the end of 2008.

"The country's problem is not the number of people, but the absence of good governance. Planting trees … that's good governance. If we reach 100 million or 200 million, as long as we all have jobs and we keep our environment healthy, we have nothing to worry about," Atienza, a staunch pro-life advocate, said in Filipino.

He said good resource management would correct anomalies that have spawned homelessness and poverty, and should be enough to address the hole in the ozone layer.

Proper reforestation programs and complete adherence to the Kyoto Protocol are the country's contributions to the global fight against climate change, he told reporters here.

The Kyoto Protocol of 1997 requires United Nations member countries to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions following a set of guidelines that affect many industries.

The United States had raised the matter of overpopulation to justify its decision not to ratify the protocol, which was pushed by former Vice President Al Gore.

It argued that the restrictions should also cover China and India because of their big populations.

Although many equate overpopulation with climate change because of the subsequent increase in motor vehicle emissions and heightened industrial expansion, population has never been a serious condition to draw the interest of world environmentalists, Atienza said.

The Philippines need not alter its climate change policy because it does not contribute as much greenhouse gases as developed countries, he said.

Atienza said overpopulation should be embraced and not feared by cities.

"We must never blame overpopulation … Everything [can be resolved by] organization," he said.

Social Welfare Secretary Esperanza Cabral, who was also in the city, said her department had noted an increase in vagrancy and homelessness in cities and towns outside Metro Manila.

It is a phenomenon that is natural for urbanizing regions, but local governments must learn to address them, she said.

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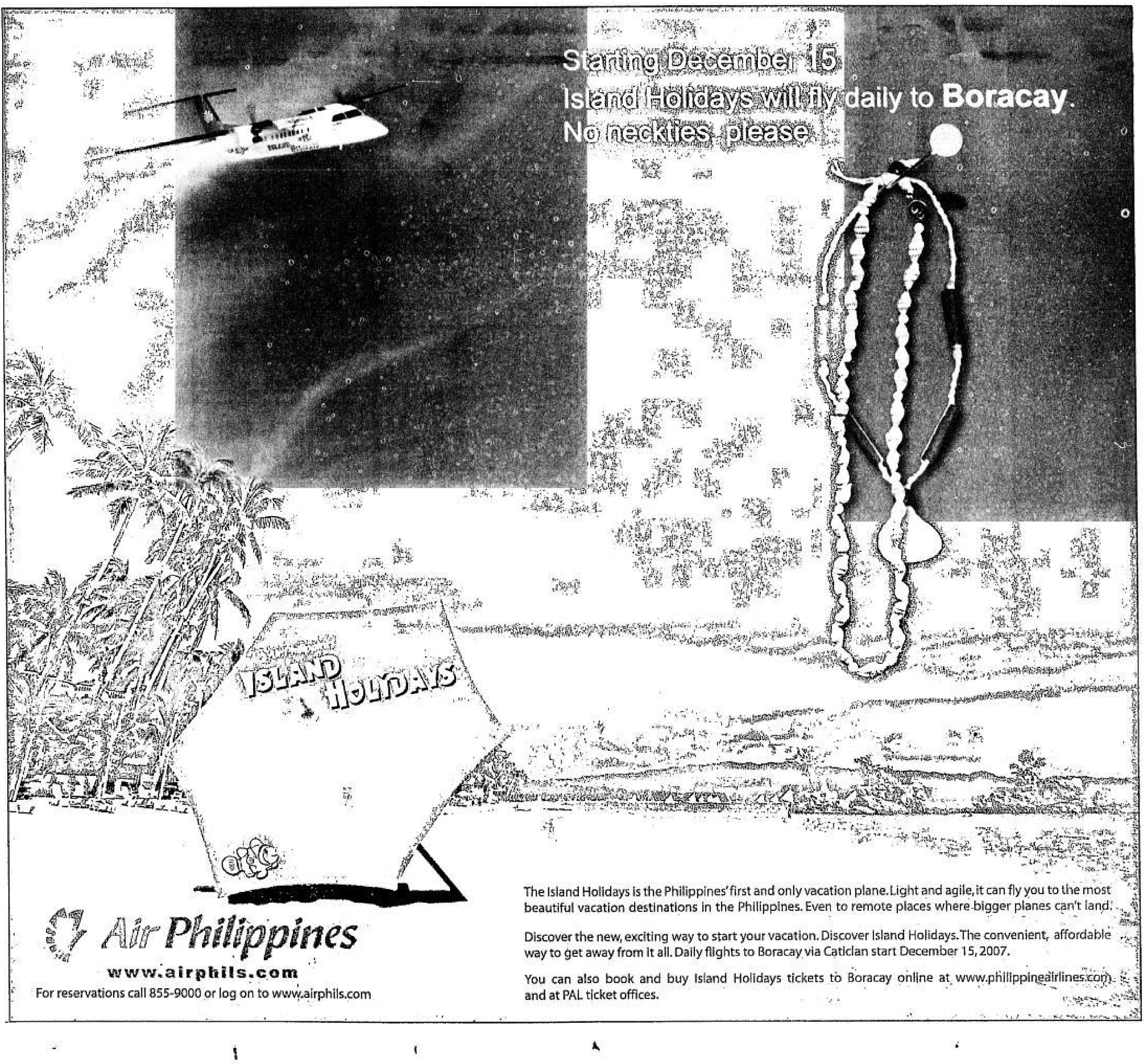

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OPINION

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Killing Ninoy again

EDITORIAL

TOMORROW THE NATION CELEBRATES THE 75TH birth anniversary of assassinated opposition leader Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr.

Thinking ahead, the President of the Philippines prepared an early birthday gift for the man we honor as the motive force behind the People Power revolution in 1986 and the democratic restoration that followed in its heady, dizzying wake. On Nov. 7, President Macapagal-Arroyo granted executive clemency to Pablo Martinez, one of the 16 soldiers sentenced to life imprisonment for the double murder of Aquino and his alleged gunman Rolando Galman.

The only thing missing, from the President's characteristically decisive resolve, was the act of spitting on Ninoy's grave. Perhaps that will come tomorrow.

As we have said over and over again in the case of pardoned plunderer Joseph Estrada, we have no objections to the very concept of executive clemency. Why should we? But we do believe, along with many other Filipinos, that its exercise should be predicated on deserving behavior; the convict must exhibit remorse, commit himself to full restitution, rejoin society on its terms (not his own). We also hold that, in the exercise of such an absolute power, the President must be motivated not by rank political considerations but in the interest of justice.

As with the Estrada case, so with the Martinez pardon. We believe politics, not justice, explains the startling act of clemency. Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III's pained and plaintive reaction suggested as much: "I sincerely hope that the pardon that was granted to one of my father's assassins was not a vengeful act against our family as we continue to stand firmly in holding this government accountable for its actions."

The 70-year-old Martinez, unlike Estrada, has exhibited true remorse, and by all accounts he has been a model prisoner. (Not being a VIP, unlike Estrada, Martinez had to wait until Nov. 22 before he could walk out of prison and enjoy his pardon to the full.) But his refusal to tell what he knows of the Aquino assassination in a way that makes sense of the incontrovertible evidence that sent him and 15 others to jail rankles. For this refusal, the President has rewarded him with a conditional release.

Or maybe not. The other day, Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Sergio Apostol advanced the extraordinary idea that his famously hands-on President did not know what she was doing. "I don't know whether it's coincidence or not, but I think the President [was] not aware [that Martinez was one of those soldiers involved in the Aquino assassination] when she signed [his pardon]," Apostol told reporters.

If that were true, shouldn't the madman who recommended his release be fired immediately? But we have not heard the telltale thumping sound of a presidential adviser's head being rolled in Malacañang. Besides, we cannot credit Apostol's version of events, not only because it runs counter to his President's character, but also because we sense that there is, in fact, method to the madness.

The best way to handle the continuing controversy over Estrada's absolute pardon is to confuse the issue; what better way to do that than to pardon somebody just as controversial? That the second pardon will unsettle the family of Ninoy's widow, Corazon Aquino, is a delicious bonus; revenge is a dish best served with cold relish.

More to the point, how can the Aquinos complain, when both mother and son, the former president and the current senator, have supported Estrada's pardon? On the day Martinez's release was announced, Noynoy said: "I am not against the granting of a pardon to persons who deserve it. However, people who have refused to accept their guilt and have shown no contrition for the crime they committed do not deserve pardon."

Exactly. That describes Estrada right down to his bright red jacket. Having denied much of the opposition access to the moral high ground, the President is free to ignore our society's highest moral standards. If much of the opposition has forgotten that the revolution Ninoy started with his supreme sacrifice was eminently moral, why should she remind them?

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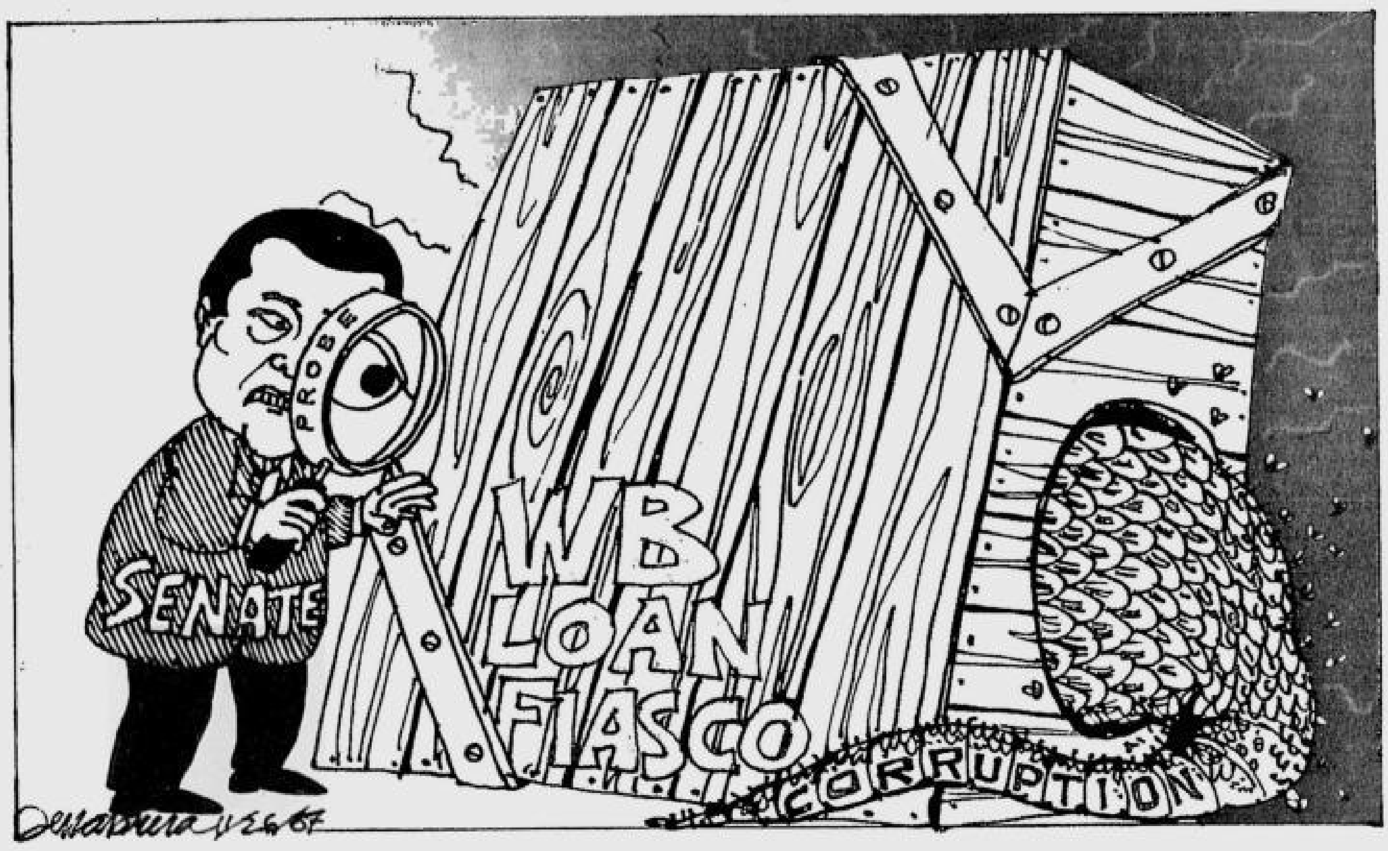

Mendoza's foot-dragging on MRT-3 takeover

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

WHAT IF YOU WERE GIVEN A CHANCE TO pay a P1,300 debt with only P800? Would you not grab at the chance? That would mean saving P500, *di ba*?

That, in effect, is what the Arroyo administration wants to do in buying out the Metro Railways Transit Corp., the consortium that owns and operates the 17-kilometer elevated light rail system along Edsa from North Avenue in Quezon City to Baclaran in Pasay City, with 13 stations and 73 coaches with a capacity of 450,000 passengers daily. By buying out Metro Rail's $865-million debt now, the government will save approximately $500 million.

The interest on Metro Rail's debt is at 12.5 percent to 15 percent. With interest rates at present very much lower (approaching 2 percent), the government can borrow now, pay off the debt and save money on interest payments.

Aside from the interest payments, the government shells out at least P6.8 billion every year to subsidize the operations of the rail system. Instead of each passenger paying P60 for the entire distance, the passenger pays only P15. The government pays for the balance of P45. Besides this subsidy, the government also spends another P250 million a month in maintenance fees.

Why? Isn't the Metro Rail a private corporation that supports itself? Yes, but under the build-operate-transfer contract between the government and the MRT-3 owners, the latter are given an assured rate of return on investment of 15 percent a year. If the net income on operations falls short of this percentage, the government is obliged to pay the difference. The government could not have found an investor to place money for the vital mass transit system if it could not be guaranteed a decent rate of return on its investment.

But due to low fares and high operation costs, MRT-3 has been losing heavily. Consequently, the government has been shelling out huge subsidies amounting to P6.5 billion a year. This is burdensome for the government, especially since it is still in the process of reducing the budget deficit. By owning the Metro Rail, the government would actually be saving lots of money on subsidies.

Furthermore, the government can buy more trains to service the passengers. As can be seen every day, the present number of trains and coaches cannot accommodate the hordes of passengers who want to ride in them. Travel time in the elevated rails is much faster than in the buses on the traffic-choked Edsa below. The purpose of the rail system is really to lessen road traffic which wastes so much imported fuel with rapidly rising prices. But the rails are not able to achieve that because they cannot meet passenger demand. There is no incentive for the operators to buy more trains and coaches. Why invest more when the government pays what it does not earn from passengers fares below the 15-percent guarantee?

But if the government owns the rail system, then it would have an incentive to buy more trains not only to earn more but to service more passengers. The latter, after all, is the primary purpose of government while the primary motive of private companies is profit.

Even better, the government can use the approximately $500-million savings to finance the 7-km Metro Rail extension from North Avenue to Monumento to connect it to the LRT on Rizal Avenue, thus completing the route of the elevated rail system. That is tantamount to having the North Avenue-Monumento extension practically for free, *di ba*?

But where will the cash-strapped government get the money to pay the $865-million debt? According to Finance Secretary Margarito Teves, five banks have already offered to finance the buyout. This loan will be at a single-digit interest rate, much lower than the present 12.5 to 15 percent. Besides, with the present high exchange rate of the peso to the dollar, the government will save millions now by paying the debt now which is payable in dollars.

The advantages are so good that President Macapagal-Arroyo and the Cabinet have already approved and signed the deal. The only fly in the ointment is Transportation Secretary Leandro Mendoza under whose wing the MRT-3 is being operated. He refuses to sign but doesn't say why. He just stonewalls. Maybe he is still gun-shy because of the scrapped ZTE broadband deal. Maybe he has become paranoid because of that. Maybe he is sulking like a spoiled child because the ZTE deal that he signed in China was scrapped.

But this time the government is doing right. This is the reverse of the ZTE deal. In the ZTE deal, we lose tons of money because of the alleged overprice; in the MRT-3 refinancing, we save the people's money.

And this is no time to be timid. The buyout deal has a Feb. 27, 2008 deadline. And if the dollar regains its strength or the peso falters (which is not remote), the Philippines forfeits the opportunity for cheap funds and will lose billions of pesos. The delay is already costing the taxpayers $5 million daily in unnecessary interest payments. That is not coming from the pockets of Mendoza; that is coming from the pockets of taxpayers.

The news of the proposed takeover has been met with public enthusiasm. At last, the government would be able to improve the rail services. The Light Rail Transit Authority has been announcing that it is bidding out the MRT-3 extension project. But even if a winning bidder is declared, no extension can be done. The MRT-3 consortium still owns the rights to that extension. Unless these rights are bought and paid for, nobody can legally undertake the project. And that will disappoint the public even more.

Mendoza's foot dragging is jeopardizing the welfare of the people.

Stakeholder

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

BY THE TIME THIS COMES OUT, I'LL BE FREEZING my butt off in the United Kingdom attending a program called "Engaging the Islamic World." It's one that invites journalists from various parts of the world to observe how Muslims live in the United Kingdom in the aftermath of 9/11. My fear when I left the country last Saturday wasn't the heat of terrorism, it was the cold of approaching winter, the forecasts in that part of the world over this week suggesting attrition for people used to balmier weather.

Before I left, I visited one of my favorite spots in the city again, which is Quiapo, scourge of people prosecuting GATT's interpretation of intellectual property rights. I hadn't been there in some time, and was pleasantly surprised to see how much the place had grown. Yes, pleasantly, seeing that growth as putting food on the table of the ragged folk there, if not indeed sending the kids that man the stalls to elementary school.

At least that was true for the Muslim side of it. The Christian side remained home only to fortune-tellers and sellers of menstruation-inducers. New buildings had sprouted in various parts of the Muslim side, showing how little the periodic raids of the authorities had done to stem market forces, if not indeed showing how peremptory those raids are. By any standard of commerce, that place is rocking.

Every time I hear talk about paradigms or experiments on how Christians and Muslims might coexist peacefully, particularly in an age of the collision of worlds, I think of Quiapo. Specifically, I think of the image of the Quiapo church standing a stone's throw away from the Muslim mosque with most passersby or passengers of jeepneys scarcely looking askance at the juxtaposition. Indeed, I think of the sound of a priest's voice lamenting sin and penitent murmurs issuing from the crowd huddled inside the Quiapo church and the wailing chant of an imam trilling out of a loudspeaker in the mosque and the worshipful murmurs of people kissing their mat, and no one in particular, least of all a patron of DVD-9s, noticing the incongruity.

I don't know that the peaceful, or even harmonious, co-existence of Christian and Muslim in Quiapo is a paradigm. But it commends itself to study.

We do have a history of distrust, fear and abhorrence of the "Moro pirate." That comes from the long years of Spanish rule when Moro pirates in swift boats periodically descended on various parts of the Visayas to rape and pillage. A church in Bohol, located near the sea, testifies to those times: That church was abandoned at one point and another built in the hinterlands because of the raids. The flock went back to the original church only when the incursions stopped. The Holy Cross is celebrated in various parts of the Visayas because it apparently performed the miracle of turning back the pirates or hiding the prospective victims in a wall of fog. All across the country, vestiges of the moro-moro persist, a morality play or pageant casting the Moro pirate as the bad guy and the Spanish conquistador (in fact the bigger pirate) as the good guy.

But I don't know how deep that really goes. I suspect the fear has to do with Moro and not with Muslim—or with the pirate and not with the religion. When I was a kid growing up in Bicol, I remember that "Moro" brought with it connotations of someone who'll rip you off if not rip your throat. But the same might be said of the Chinese and the Indian, without the cutthroat element, but which wasn't altogether discounted, as "*huhulihin ka ng* Bombay (the Bombay will get you)" suggests. Bigotry savages children most of all.

But the religious aspect wasn't particularly pronounced: The excoriation didn't have much to do with Islam. I suspect that is so because our own Christianity isn't really Christianity in the Crusades-sense of the word. As Nick Joaquin's stories show—and Nick was as passionate a Christian as any—much of it is really pagan folklore wearing Christian trappings.

Whatever the reason for it is, the hostility between Christian and Muslim in this country isn't really the stuff of which bitter enmities such as you see in other parts of the world, or downright pogroms, are made. Which is probably what's made it a lot easier for Muslims and Christians to come together here. Quiapo moreover has offered a tremendous incentive in addition to this. That is the precious nectar of the gods called DVD. Today, you say Moro, and people will be quick to add not "pirate" but "DVD," with the appropriate Maranao accent. Of course the cynical will say that's not much of an improvement, "pirate" and "DVD" being the same thing. What can one say? Some piracies are less murderous than others.

Scholarship is even willing to concede that William Drake's piratical ventures formed the "primitive accumulation" that shot England off to a robust capitalist start. The principle in any case is larger than "Piracy pays," and goes on to say, "Stake-holding pays." The ware need not be contraband, even if it's not always easy to think of a completely legitimate product any group of sellers in this country can find a niche in.

The point is that you give a group of people a stake in society, whether in the form of pirated DVD or "5-6" or Chinese restaurant, they will find it easier to get along with their fellows, however they hold to other beliefs. Certainly, they will exert themselves to turn their enclaves into zones of peace and prosperity. Look at Quiapo: The Muslim part of it used to be one of the nastiest spots in the city, which even cops pursuing suspects dreaded to enter. Today, you'll be hard put to find anywhere safer.

Today, you'll be hard put to find a place where Cross and Crescent smile at each other more benignly.

Cristo Rey

SOUNDING BOARD

Fr. Joaquin G. Bernas, S.J.

"As long as individuals and states refuse to submit to the rule of our Savior, there can be no really hopeful prospect of a lasting peace among nations."—Pius XI, 1925

IF IT IS RELEVANT ENOUGH FOR WIKIPEDIA which does not profess to be a religious mouthpiece, yesterday's feast should have a place in the column of one who puts S.J. after his name. Hence a word about Christ the King whose Solemnity the Christian world celebrated yesterday, Sunday.

Perhaps the most celebrated royal leader in our day is Queen Elizabeth of England. Her office might be largely symbolic but she still wields tremendous clout. Consider her titles. She is Queen Elizabeth II by the Grace of God, Queen of this Realm and of Her Other Realms and Territories, Head of the Commonwealth, Defender of the Faith.

But that is nothing compared to the royalty whose feast we celebrated yesterday. Jesus is King by the Grace of God, Shepherd of the People and Commander of Israel, God's Beloved Son, the Image of the Invisible God, Lord of Lords, King of Kings, the Firstborn of all Creation, Head of the Church, and Firstborn of the Dead. And these do not say everything.

But first let us recall the origin of the feast. It was Pope Pius XI who started it in 1925 through his encyclical Quas Primas. Why was Pius XI inspired to establish the feast? He put it this way:

"In the first Encyclical Letter which We addressed at the beginning of Our Pontificate to the Bishops of the universal Church, We referred to the chief causes of the difficulties under which mankind was laboring. And We remember saying that these manifold evils in the world were due to the fact that the majority of men had thrust Jesus Christ and his holy law out of their lives; that these had no place either in private affairs or in politics: and We said further, that as long as individuals and states refused to submit to the rule of our Savior, there would be no really hopeful prospect of a lasting peace among nations."

The memorable line is: "As long as individuals and states refused to submit to the rule of our Savior, there would be no really hopeful prospect of a lasting peace among nations."

Even today the warning of Pius XI still rings true.

But the same warning was given centuries ago by Jesus Christ himself. Last Thursday the gospel reading was about Jesus Christ weeping as he entered Jerusalem. He then warned:

"If this day you only knew what makes for peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. For the days are coming upon you when your enemies will raise a palisade against you; they will encircle you and hem you in on all sides. They will smash you to the ground and your children within you, and they will not leave one stone upon another within you because you did not recognize the time of your visitation."

Jesus predicted then that Jerusalem would be destroyed because the city, and especially its leaders, had become spiritually bankrupt and morally corrupt and had relied instead on political alliances and intrigues for the salvation of the city. It broke the heart of Christ. So he wept.

This was also what Pius XI saw in 1925 when he rallied the Christian world to honor Christ the King and to live by his teachings. The dire warning was "that as long as individuals and states refused to submit to the rule of our Savior, there would be no really hopeful prospect of a lasting peace among nations."

The events that followed in the 20th century—destructive wars and manmade calamities—verified what Pius XI had warned about.

The warning should give us pause. We may not have invented corruption and injustice but we have perfected them. Even as we await final report of the World Bank and of never-ending legislative investigations, the verdict on amparo petitions and the results of peace negotiations, we must ask ourselves: Have we really accepted Christ as our King? As Pius XI put it: "As individuals and as states [we have] refused to submit to the rule of our Savior."

The feast of Christ the King reminds me of the Mexican Jesuit martyr Blessed Miguel Pro whose feast was commemorated last Friday. Fr. Miguel Pro died during the height of political terror against the Catholic Church. Under threat of persecution, torture, arrest and even death, priests were prohibited from administering communion, baptism, confession, confirmation and marriage. It was under this regime that Father Pro worked and met his death. As the firing squad raised its weapons, Father Pro, on Nov. 23, 1927, in a clear and loud voice shouted, *Viva Cristo Rey*!

On this last week of the liturgical year, we as individuals and as a nation are given an opportunity to recommit ourselves to Christ the King. Unless we do so, we are assured that there can be "no really hopeful prospect of a lasting peace among nations."

Love, sex and life

KRIS-CROSSING MINDANAO

Antonio J. Montalvan II

MY STUDENT VERY CONFIDENTLY TELLS THE class that to keep the young off sex and teen pregnancy, the antidote can only be contraceptives. "We are now in the practical age," she says. It goes without saying, of course, that little did she know about the "practicality" of what the statistics say, not to mention the attendant problems that the "antidote" spreads erroneously across societies.

Addressing such mistaken approaches, pervasive as they already are, as the root of worsening incidences on teen pregnancy, live-in arrangements, promiscuity and even youth violence, was the raison d'être behind last week's Second International Congress on Education in Love, Sex and Life held at the Edsa Shangri-La Hotel in Manila.

Sex education is a favorite topic that we often debate in television talk shows, legislative halls, chat rooms and blogs. But the arguments remain redundant—reducing teenage pregnancies and diseases as the solutions—rather than concern for the good of young people themselves. Too often we hear anti-life advocates and latter-day Malthusian philosophers scoff at abstinence education—impossible, so they say, given the pervasiveness of sexual promiscuity among the young—as though it were a "roundabout and unrealistic way of reducing the bad statistics."

The common model is to use American statistics, as we all know that in the United States contraception is socially promoted and liberally practiced. For instance, current news stories toast Sep Juico, the Quezon City councilor, for repeating the American model that contraception will reduce the incidence of abortion. The US statistics, however, tell us the opposite. Abortion cases have risen tremendously there despite the liberal application of contraceptive use. It just does not follow. Clearly the problem lies somewhere else.

Earlier this year, a survey by the US National Campaign to Prevent Teen Pregnancy instead manifested what people would rather hear: a strong abstinence message. It would appear that there is a sizable majority of parents and young people themselves who recognize that postponing sex for marriage is better for them than experimenting with sex and premature romantic relationships. Expect the "ultra-modern" pundits to balk at this. But let the statistics talk.

In fact, the Manila conference last week was the result of a popular clamor to follow through what had taken place in Mexico in May last year, during the Primer Encuentro Internacional sobre la Educación de la Afectividad y la Sexualidad. Attended by 750 policymakers, parents, social entrepreneurs and development educators from four continents, the highly positive impact of the Mexico congress led to the calling of the second congress, this time in Manila.

Are we truly preparing the young for love and life? Are families and educators addressing this as a matter of growing concern? Those questions were not thrown to congress delegates to debate upon but as the solid foundation—antidote—to a growing phenomenal problem that contraceptives have not solved.

The plain truth remains that so much money has been poured into propaganda and rhetoric, including lobbying in Congress, for the promotion of contraceptive use under the guise of the catch-all "reproductive health," which does not exclude teen sexuality. Yet, very little impact has been achieved addressing teen sexuality problems. Values education on self-discipline and character has remained elusive, largely because of the myth propagated that sexual liberation has become an immovable mountain.

"Safer sex," again as empirical data point out, has in fact become a lame proposition. More than one study has concluded that this approach "fails to protect many young people from the bad consequences of sex in the short or long term. Sadly, it will also give them a confused idea of the meaning of sex and rob them of willpower and confidence in the face of pressure." Just think of what kind of adult generation will take over in "nurturing" the young of tomorrow. Just think what spineless and diffident characters such will produce and who will take over in managing the social problems of the future.

The Manila congress was attended not just by parents and educators, but also by young people themselves, especially those involved in the orientation of youth peers. Who was behind the undertaking? There is an international network of parents and educators who are straight arrows in their objectives. First is InterMedia Consulting based in Rome and Chicago promoting family and educational values. Based in the Philippines is EDUCHILD Foundation Inc., which organizes initiatives for parents and professional educators on family life education and the education of children. Then there is Developmental Advocacy for Women Volunteerism (DAWV Foundation Inc.), a Philippine-based personal initiative of women for the development of women toward social responsibility and poverty alleviation. The congress was organized in collaboration with the Department of Education. Also collaborating were resource sites such as sexrespect.com and charactercounts.org, both of which are in the thick of abstinence and character education.

It may hearten pro-life advocates that the congress sponsors were a veritable who's who of the Philippine corporate world, such as Globe Telecom, GMA TV and radio, San Miguel Corp., RMN Networks, National Book Store, Universal Robina Corp., Nestlé Philippines, BDO, Insular Life; we thought that anti-life issues were more popular as some in media would falsely harp on us.

The congress slogan captures for us what promise this can do to the young: love, laughter and life ever after.

* * *

Comments to monta@cu-cdo.edu.ph

English and the nation's memory

COMMENTARY

Jonathan Best

SITTING AT MY DESK AT THE ORTIGAS FOUNDATION Library in Pasig, surrounded by 16,000 books and periodicals relating to Philippine history, culture and the arts, I realize over 90 percent are in English, with maybe another 500 vintage titles in Spanish and very few in Filipino. This breakdown is probably not unlike many other major reference libraries in Manila.

Amid all the discussion in the press, academic circles and the political sector, as to whether or not English should be the primary language for education in this country, one of the greatest advantages of an English-language education for Filipinos is almost always overlooked. The ability to read and comprehend English makes vast amounts of Philippine history and heritage, along with East Asian and world history, accessible to Filipinos. Constantly promoting English, primarily as a means for contract workers to find jobs abroad or in domestic call centers, perpetuates a servile colonial mentality and degrades an important academic discipline.

English should be regarded primarily as an educational tool which enhances a student's or the general public's knowledge of the Philippines, builds up national intellectual capabilities and enriches national culture and identity. Books in English also open up vast reservoirs of collective human knowledge regarding world history, science, religion, political theory, literature and the arts. Works originally written in English or translated into modern English over the last several centuries make up the largest repository of printed information. Despite the marvels of the Internet, I still believe reading full-length printed books is the best way to absorb complex information and acquire knowledge.

If the Philippines loses its college-level English-language skills, which seems to be happening at present, it will be losing access to much of its own indigenous history and national memory. Some parochial nationalists argue that this is just fine with them; let the nation build its future on a local Malay-based language such as Tagalog. What they overlook is that the majority of educated Filipinos have been writing in English or have been translated into English from Spanish for well over a century. Despite the fact that many Filipinos were literate in various dialects at the time of the Spanish conquest in 1565, there is virtually no evidence of a substantial canon of work written in a native Filipino language.

In the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries there were travel accounts of the Philippines in Spanish, French and English, voluminous reports to Spain by officials and friars, and Spanish dictionaries of Filipino languages phonetically spelled out in the Roman alphabet. Many Filipinos were writing eloquently in Spanish in the 19th century, with Jose Rizal leading the long list. During the first years of American occupation of the country, American scholars translated thousands of Spanish books and documents into English and added a tremendous amount of new sociological, cultural and scientific information in their lengthy reports. Emma Blair and James A. Robertson's 55-volume annotated set of Philippine historical material is an outstanding example of the American dedication to written documentation.

By the 1920s and onwards Filipinos such as Maximo M. Kalaw, Claro M. Recto, Manuel Quezon, Camilo Osias and Rafael Palma were writing in both Spanish and English. After World War II, major Filipino writers wrote mostly in English, including National Artists for Literature Nick Joaquin, F. Sionil Jose and Bien Lumbrera. Political theorists like Renato Constantino and eminent historians O. D. Corpuz and Resil B. Mojares also chose English. Today the large majority of Filipino writers, historians, scholars and journalists are working almost entirely in English. English is very much part and parcel of the Philippines' national birthright.

Unfortunately for the ardent nationalists the sheer practicality of trying to acquire a college-level education in the humanities solely in Filipino is not feasible. Young people in Third World countries, especially in the case of the Philippines, can spurn the serious study of foreign languages in the name of national sovereignty but ironically they will end up sacrificing a large portion of their national memory and individual heritage. A nation that forgets its past identity and place in world history is ill-prepared for the inevitable challenges of future colonial pressures.

Filipino regional languages and their many spoken dialects are beautiful and deeply expressive of local cultures and the modern Philippine nation. They represent ancient and modern oral and written traditions which capture the finest nuances of the Filipino character and the Filipino world. However, as is true in all parts of the world, local languages are dying off or being hybridized at a rapidly increasing rate. Much is being done to try to record and save these linguistic traditions but the loss is an inevitable result of high speed, electronic, global communication. The positive side of this phenomenon is that greater and greater numbers of people across the globe are now able to communicate with each other in the remaining international languages and can share massive amounts of knowledge and information, stored in the collective libraries and archives of the world.

The government policy seems to be to give every poor Filipino a bit of fractured English and send them on their way abroad hopefully to earn foreign exchange. It would be better to strongly promote English for high school and college students, especially reading and writing skills, so they can build a strong new nation from within, on their own terms. Rich Filipinos automatically provide their children with this type of English instruction. It should be available to all who want it.

For the ever-so-slowly evolving Philippine middle class, this just might create a new generation of highly articulate readers and writers with excellent abilities to access information and form critical opinions and judgments concerning their own society and political leaders.

Jonathan Best is rare books consultant for the Ortigas Foundation Library and Philippine Studies Center.

Pakistan's generals

REVEILLE

Ramon J. Farolan

TODAY THE WORLD WORRIES NOT SO MUCH ABOUT Iraq, Iran or even North Korea with its nuclear facilities. The concern has shifted to Pakistan, the only Muslim nation with nuclear weapons and the capability to deliver them against any target as directed by their leaders. In the hands of extremists, this would make Pakistan the most dangerous nation on the planet.

Since Aug. 14, 1947, when Pakistan was created from the British Indian empire, the country with the second-largest Muslim population has been ruled for more than half of its 60-year history by army generals.

Mohamed Ali Jinnah, the nation's founding leader, used a common religion to unite his people and to forge a sense of national identity. But the period that followed independence were years of political instability and in 1958, President Iskander Mirza declared martial law and appointed Gen. Ayub Khan as chief martial law administrator.

Gen. Ayub Khan was the first native Pakistan army commander in chief. A graduate of Sandhurst Royal Military Academy, he was at 44, its youngest full general. He would later join the cabinet as defense minister. Barely a few weeks after his designation as martial law administrator, Khan staged a bloodless coup deposing President Mirza, and sending him off to exile in England. Most Pakistanis welcomed the coup and the stage was set for future military interventions in government.

Among the reforms carried out by Khan were the writing of a Constitution for the nation and the election of the President by a limited number of councilmen, a modest beginning toward representative democracy.

While the Ayub Khan years were marked by relative internal stability, the turning point in his rule was the Indo-Pakistan war of 1965. Although Pakistan gained ground over the dispute in Kashmir, the settlement with India known as the Tashkent Declaration was unpopular with many of his political allies. In 1969, in the face of growing unrest, Ayub Khan turned over the presidency to another general, Yahya Khan.

Gen. Yahya Khan was a product of the Indian Military Academy at Dehra Dun, and served with British forces in Italy and North Africa during World War II. He introduced direct elections for the country on a "one man, one vote" basis, a move which eventually contributed to the split of Pakistan into two nations—East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and West Pakistan. He reorganized the Army, turning to China for equipment and training requirements. Although relations were cool with the United States, Yahya Khan helped establish the communications between the United States and China which eventually led to the Nixon trip to China in 1972. Suffering setbacks in the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971, Khan surrendered the presidency to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, head of the Pakistan People's Party and father of Benazir Bhutto.

For the next five years, civilian rule was in place in Pakistan. But as political and civil disorders intensified, the army again took over.

Gen. Zia ul-Haq, who was promoted to army chief by Bhutto, led the coup imposing martial law in July 1977. Zia, like his predecessor, was commissioned in the British Indian army and trained at the US Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

When Nusrat Bhutto, wife of Zulfikar, appealed to the Supreme Court to declare Zia's coup illegal, the court ruled under the "Doctrine of Necessity" that given the unstable conditions in the country, Zia's actions were legal.

Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was later tried and executed by hanging.

As the third military president of Pakistan, General Zia introduced the Islamic Sharia legal code, replacing the secular policies of the past and increasing the influence of religious parties in the civil service and military organization.

In August 1988, in a mysterious plane crash just after takeoff, General Zia perished along with many of his top commanders and the US ambassador to Pakistan, Arnold Raphel. Some theories on the disaster blamed followers of Benazir Bhutto, the CIA as well as elements of the Pakistan army.

Following Zia's death, Benazir Bhutto was elected the first female head of government of an Islamic state. For the next decade, power would alternate between Bhutto and Nawaz Sharif, head of the Pakistan Muslim League.

In 1998, Nawaz Sharif promoted Gen. Pervez Musharraf as Army chief over the heads of several senior officers. During the so-called Kargill conflict with India, Sharif attempted to dismiss Musharraf who happened to be out of the country. Army units took over Karachi airport, allowing Musharraf's plane to land with only a few minutes of fuel to spare. Sharif was placed under house arrest and exiled to Saudi Arabia. Musharraf assumed the title of chief executive and later appointed himself President, becoming Pakistan's fourth army chief to assume executive powers.

Since assuming power, Musharraf has guided Pakistan through four successive years of 7-percent economic growth rates per annum, bolstered by strong support from the United States, in exchange for allowing use of three air bases against the Taliban in Afghanistan.

In his memoirs, "In The Line Of Fire," Musharraf reveals that after 9/11, in securing Pakistan's support for the war on terror, US Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage threatened Pakistan, saying, "Be prepared to be bombed. Be prepared to go back to the stone age." Secretary of State Colin Powell put things more bluntly, telling him: "You are with us or against us."

Today there are signs of weakening support for Musharraf. At a recent visit to the country, US Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte called on him to proceed with elections, get rid of his uniform and release all political prisoners, threatening a cut-off in US aid.

There is, however, one big difference in the present situation. On May 28, 1998, Pakistan exploded a nuclear device in its desert areas and successfully test-fired a missile capable of delivering a nuclear warhead. This changed the picture in the region radically. Musharraf may not be the poster boy for democracy as the United States would wish but he appears to be someone who can deal forcefully with the extremists threatening to take over Pakistan. And if Musharraf should falter, another general, Lt. Gen. Ashfaq Kayani, the vice chief of the army, is waiting in the wings. It appears that it will take some time before civilian rule can be restored in Pakistan.

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Disability an HR issue too

THE GOVERNMENT AND OUR SOCIETY should look at disability less as a social welfare problem, and more as a human rights issue. Persons with disabilities like me have our own individual talents and abilities, but other people only see our physical disabilities and limitations.

We have the same rights as every other Filipino, such as the rights to education, employment, accessible facilities and transportation. We are persons, not just "objects" of charity. Government should adopt a rights-based approach to disability.

Even civil society tends to ignore us; it doesn't mention persons with disabilities when it speaks out on human rights and development. We are the most marginalized group in our society. It seems as if we are "lesser" human beings.

Are we "children of a lesser god"? But are we not supposed to be children of one and the same God—even if we call God by different names?

Human rights are for everyone. Am I right?

—DAVID TABANIAG,
davidtabaniag@yahoo.com

'Collateral damage' didn't come from Remonde

THIS IS IN REACTION TO THE EDITORIAL titled, "The low road" (INQUIRER, 11/23/07), on the unscheduled press briefing conducted by Secretary Cerge M. Remonde on Nov. 20, when members of the Malacañang Press Corps sought his comments on the World Bank's deferment of talks on RP road loans.

On the NRIMP, Remonde cited, en toto, the DPWH statement, issued Nov. 19 by Secretary Hermogenes Ebdane, copies of which were distributed.

As head of the Pro Performance Tracking System, Remonde briefed the press corps on the status of priority projects and their funding, measures to curb corruption and the multi-sectoral representation in the Pro Performance Steering Committee (a business paper put out the list), to show that government was addressing the concerns of the WB long before they were raised.

As some reporters did not have the Nov. 19 WB statement issued by James Adams, vice president for the East Asia and Pacific Region, we distributed copies of the two-page statement.

To provide further context to that WB statement, we furnished them copies of an article from The Australian captioned "World Bank struggling with corruption," under the byline of Bob Davis and Glenn R. Simpson, which provided insights on "the turmoil the bank has undergone to deal with graft." To allegations that WB president Robert Zoellick had not been briefed on the NRIMP proposal, Adams "said he wasn't trying to go behind Mr. Zoellick's back."

"The World Bank's anti-fraud unit has long been at loggerheads with departments that make loans," the article said. Just as telling was this paragraph: "The board rejection represents a slap at the staff and indicates continuing divisions within the bank."

It was in that context, provided by the above-cited article, that a brief but animated exchange on "collateral damage" ensued, although I recall distinctly that the colorful description was in fact supplied by one of the reporters.

As pointed out by WB's Leonora Aquino-Gonzales, "a lot has been said by the World Bank yesterday (Monday) and the government today (Tuesday)." (INQUIRER, 11/21/07) We agree.

In a Joint Statement on Nov. 21, WB and our government declared: "Contrary to reports, the Bank has not suspended any loans for the NRIMP .... The World Bank continues to support development in the Philippines and remains actively engaged with the Government in strengthening governance and fighting corruption."

The context for that joint statement must be clear from the tortuous route this project has taken in media—from being deferred, shelved, blocked, halted, frozen, stopped, to "not suspended."

If there was any spin in that briefing, it is that projects are in place and on schedule, monitoring is maintained at all levels, performance tracking is working, slippage (if any) is addressed, and we will hit our targets. The rest was just context.

—ROMEO L. JUNIA,
chief of staff,
Office of the Director General,
Presidential Management Staff,
Malacañang, Manila

In other words, the Presidential Management Staff was purveying information it did not have direct knowledge of: the allegations carried in The Australian. When a reporter raised the possibility of "collateral damage," Secretary Remonde should have shot it down. That he didn't means he approved its use—which is precisely why he introduced the news report from The Australian in the first place.—**The Editors**

All-night noise from Maynilad excavation project

I WOULD LIKE TO CALL THE ATTENTION of Maynilad about its project in Sampaloc, Manila, specifically the excavation at the corner of Sobriedad and Algeciras Streets in Barangay 443, Zone 44. The project was started in April and, last we heard, it would be over by Nov. 30.

Despite repeated complaints, exchange of letters, phone calls and dialogues, the problem persists: noisy equipment all night, depriving us of sleep and causing us stress. This has been going on for the past seven months.

The noise would sometimes be gone for a few days but would be back soon after as if the contractor expects that we would just forget whatever past agreements they have had with us. Do we have to remind them all the time that they are working in a residential area?

Maynilad and its contractor are violating our human rights and we don't know for how long. Whom do we turn to for assistance?

—TESS AUSTRIA,
tessaustria@yahoo.com

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Reforms needed at LTO

THE PROTEST staged by more than 500 militant drivers and their families last Nov. 8, 2007 in front of the Land Transportation Office showed that ordinary Filipinos are really dissatisfied, if not fed up, with the poor, selfish and inefficient performance of the LTO.

LTO officials should pay heed to the growing clamor of people for real change and reforms in their office and for better service. Each time I renew my driver's license, I can't help but accept the fact that fixers freely operate at the LTO.

Why doesn't the LTO go after them? I don't know if there is a connivance between the fixers and some LTO officials and employees. But it is obvious that priority is given to license applicants who can grease their hands.

And what's the purpose of the drug test if the result is not produced or given to the licensee? Is there really a test conducted? And why is the fee for such a test too costly?

—JERRY R. OBLEPIAS,
jerry_oblepias@yahoo.com

No room for mistake in bomb experts' world

From page A1

what makes a bomb tick.

Out of media glare, members of the Explosives and Ordnance Division (EOD) and the Philippine Bomb Data Center (PBDC) work quietly on bomb sites, sifting through debris.

Exposure to hazardous chemicals can weaken their immune system and can have a lethal effect on their bodies in the long run. Weak structures in bomb sites can collapse and kill.

Chief Insp. Raymond Rosero, PBDC deputy chief, said strict adherence to procedure and safety was a key to the job. "You have to respect the bomb and the person who created it. Never ever underestimate the bomb and the bomber. The capability for the bomb to do damage is enormous," he said.

The wiry Rosero, 34, can still pass off as a college student. He is the future of the EOD community, police veterans said.

The PBDC was formed in 2005 to help in the fight against terrorism. One of its mandates is to help local EOD units improve their knowledge and techniques. This falls on Rosero as chief of the PBDC's training section.

The explosions at the Glorietta 2 mall in Makati City on Oct. 19 and at the Batasan complex in Quezon City have put a harsh spotlight on these experts.

The tell-tale marks were all strewn at the Batasan that led to the swift conclusion that the blast that killed four people and wounded a dozen others was caused by a powerful bomb.

But in the case of Glorietta, where 11 people died and over a hundred injured, the experts say the explosion could have been caused by an accumulation of gases—a finding disputed by owners of the mall, Ayala Land Inc.

"We haven't seen any evidence of a bomb," said Rosero. "If there are those who doubt that, the court can be the final arbiter."

Skills required

Rosero has been with the PBDC since its creation. A member of the Philippine National Police Academy (PNPA) Class of 1996, Rosero is a former student of computer engineering, a background useful in his job.

Besides investigative skills, bomb squad members must have knowledge in chemistry, electricity, physics and mathematics, he said.

They also have to profile bombers. "You have to study bombers because it's easy to lose them. They can be anyone. They can change their looks. They can mingle with their environment."

Like ordinary criminals, bombers go back to the scene of the crime to survey the destruction they have wrought. "It's an ego booster," Rosero said. "It's also a trial and error on their part. Based on what they see on the scene, they can refine their methods."

In a week, EOD units nationwide will receive two to five calls regarding bombs. A few will turn out to be the real thing, Rosero said.

Risks

Because of the dangerous nature of their job, camaraderie is strong in the group, established early during training.

Safety is of paramount consideration. In 2000, one member of the Makati City EOD unit died while handling an explosive planted at a gasoline station on McKinley Road. In 2005, another EOD investigator was killed while probing a device in Mindanao.

Applicants for the job undergo neuropsychiatric and drug tests. "We don't want to teach students who become neurotic later on and become our worst enemies," Rosero said.

"Dedication is important. Some might have the wrong motivation to be bomb experts. Others want to be EOD just for the opportunity to get better work abroad."

The first thing an applicant is taught is "safety, safety, safety."

Unwritten traditions

"We have unwritten traditions. During training, an instructor has to make sure a demo bomb explodes, otherwise, it means one case of beer," joked Rosero, a nondrinker.

The point is also to stress safety. When a bomb explodes on a student trying to defuse it, or when he trips a small booby trap bomb inside the bomb itself, it's another case of beer.

"When you make a mistake in the real world, there is no time out, there's no turning back because you will be in bits and pieces," he said. "When an instructor explodes a bomb accidentally, he is no longer credible."

He also said fellow bomb experts would never joke about using bombs on each other. "Some of us were taught to concoct substances that can kill quietly. So we don't joke about explosives because if reflects on you."

If a member has been gone from the EOD for a while, he also needs review and retraining. "Being EOD is highly technical. You can't stay where you are with the knowledge you have. You need to upgrade your knowledge, ideas and techniques," he said.

Camaraderie

In the EOD community, rank matters very little. It's all about experience or the number of incidents you have been to and the amount of training you have. Respect is earned by experience, training, and your own awareness of safety.

When an explosion happens, different EOD units respond out of a sense of camaraderie in the community. "In a bomb situation, we need all the help we can get. That's how we work," said the EOD member.

The length of a post-blast investigation depends on the size of the explosion site, Rosero said. The process can take anywhere from one week to months.

According to Rosero, smoke produced by the explosion can tell a lot about the bomb used. Black and gray smoke indicates high explosives. Probers swab with cotton the walls and the roof for traces of explosive material.

He also said that during investigation, the area must be free from onlookers and anyone who could "contaminate" the evidence, including K9 sniffing dogs.

Competition, hazards

At the bomb site, the competitive spirit of members of the EOD community surfaces, Rosero related. "Everyone lays out theories and defend them through evidence. Based on our assessment, we come up with the results," he said.

No one person is supposed to influence the investigation. "The evidence at hand should jibe with what you know," he said.

Debate during the process is normal. "It's your theory and my theory on the table. Let's see who wins. You have to be well-versed and your explanation should be based on training," he said.

Resources needed

Because of the high risks involved, Rosero advocates a raise on hazard pay.

"Explosive substances can be dangerous to your health. We inhale them and we handle them. Too much exposure can affect our immune system. After all, we are not supermen, we are just human," he said.

Rosero also said more resources were needed to buy protective gear, a problem common in local bomb squad units. They have to improvise because of the lack of equipment, Rosero said.

But Rosero stressed that the local EOD could be at par with the best in the world. "We are really good actually. Not as good as other countries since we learned everything from them. But we take what we can apply," he said.

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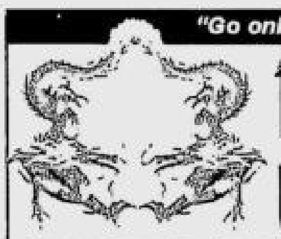

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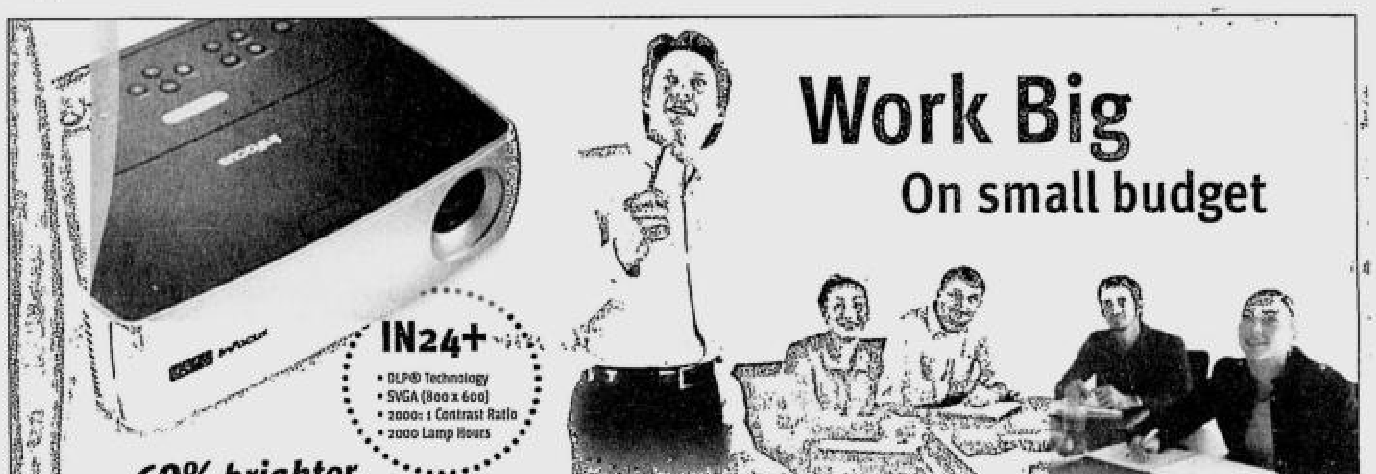

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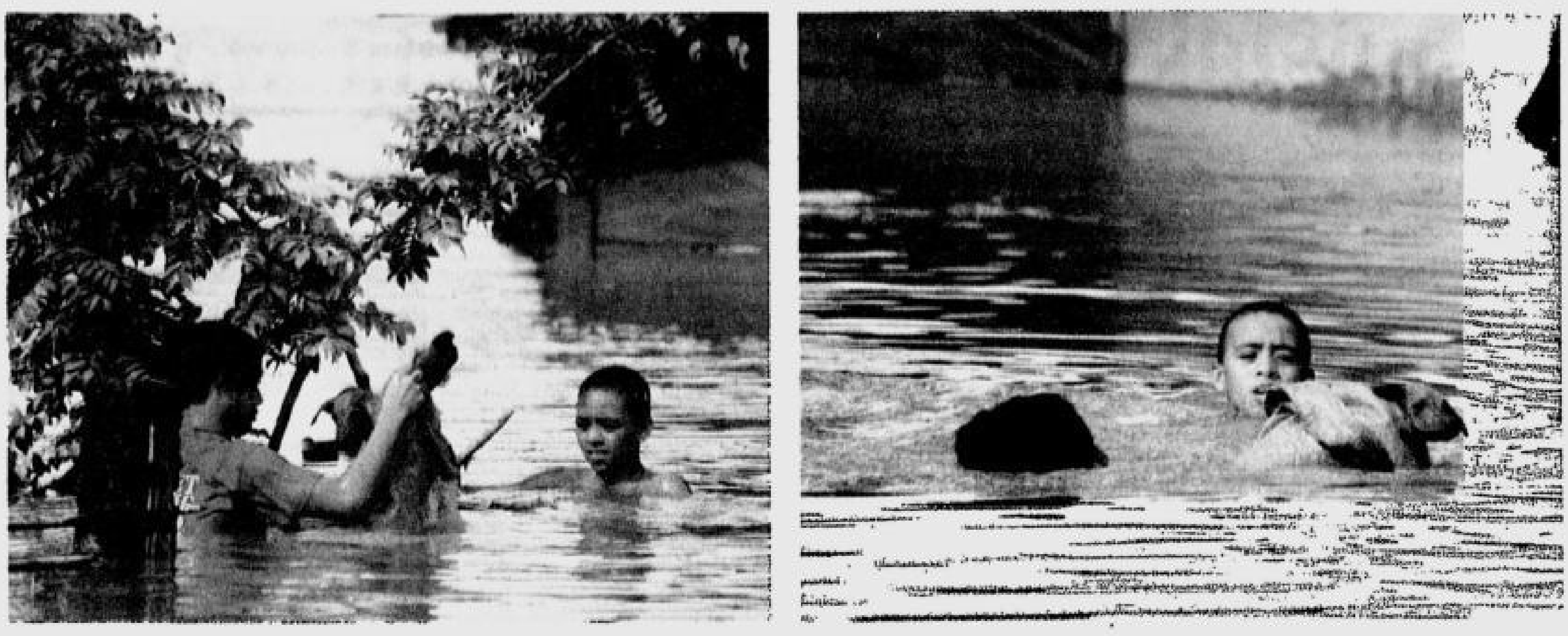

AS THIS sequence of photos shows, a dog named Galis swims toward a tree for safety from the floods on R. Tadeo Street in Bustos, Manila, brought about by the release of water from the Angat Dam. Melvin Agnustura, 16, and Lucky Lopez, 14, who were playing basketball in a flooded playground, decide to rescue the stranded animal. They wrap Galis with a sack and swim with him to safe ground.

EDWIN BACASMAS

'Mina' lashes ...

From page A1

north before exiting into the South China Sea on Wednesday, said Director Prisco Nilo of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa).

With Mina menacing the country from the east, and Lando threatening from the west, another storm—to be named "Nonoy"—is brewing in the Pacific Ocean, also in the east.

Nilo said that due to the "Fujiwhara effect," the exit of Mina could pull back Lando and pave the way for the storm's return to the country. "There is an interaction going on between Mina and Lando," he said.

The "Fujiwhara effect" is when two storms rotate on almost opposite positions at a single point.

"Mina is the dominant of the two. When the dominant system turns, the other system (Lando) will also move," Nilo said.

Over the weekend, Mina changed direction from a western to a northwestern course, and was expected to make landfall in Isabela by 2 a.m. or 3 a.m. today.

Dance of storms

Nilo said that based on their two mathematical forecast models, Lando, which is stationary near Vietnam, could make a return swing on its way to Palawan.

Lando killed 14 people in a swipe through Central Visayas last week.

Another model predicts Lando would hit the northern portion of Palawan and climb to the southern parts of Bicol and Sorsogon.

If indeed it returns, Lando is expected to enter the Philippine area of responsibility on Monday and make landfall by Tuesday evening.

But Nilo said Lando, with center winds of 95 kph, would be weaker than Mina.

Nilo said Lando was expected to meet up with Nonoy around Thursday. He said the two weather systems could merge over the Philippine Sea.

If that happens, the new storm will lift off toward the north and follow Mina's direction on its way to Japan, Nilo said, adding that he did not expect that new storm to make landfall in the country.

Nonoy is expected to arrive in three to four days with winds that could reach 55 kph.

The last time a storm made a U-turn after leaving the country was 10 years ago, he added.

Signal No. 3 has been raised over the provinces of Cagayan, Isabela, Quirino, Aurora, Catanduanes, Camarines Norte and Polilio Island.

Signal No. 2 is still up over Camarines Sur, Quezon, Nueva Vizcaya, Kalinga, Mt. Province, Ifugao and Apayao.

Signal No. 1 is in effect over Albay, Burias Island, Marinduque, Laguna, Rizal, Bulacan, Batangas, Nueva Ecija, Tarlac, Pangasinan, Benguet, La Union, Ilocos Sur, Ilocos Norte, Abra, and the Babuyan Group of Islands.

In Metro Manila, residents can expect cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers as Mina makes its way through Luzon, Nilo said. "We are far from the center but we are affected by the rainband of Mina."

Ms Arroyo ordered yesterday a new round of evacuations in Central Visayas in anticipation of the return of Lando.

"The President has ordered preparedness measures in areas that will be hit by the storm (Lando), particularly in the Central Visayas," Office of Civil Defense chief Glen Rabonza said.

Earlier, Ms Arroyo ordered evacuations in northern Luzon. Disaster management officials said close to 100,000 people—54,000 in Isabela and 40,000 in Aurora—were to be moved.

Philippine National Police chief Director General Avelino Razon said the PNP had declared a suspension of offensive police operations (Sopo) against insurgents and domestic threat groups in five regions in Luzon threatened by Mina.

The other day, the military also declared a suspension of offensive military operations (Somo) in the Luzon and Mimaropa areas.

Dam water released

Mina dumped heavy rains on farming lands in Isabela early Sunday, prompting Magat Dam officials in Ramon town to open three spillway gates and release 1,049 cubic meters per second of excess water.

The dam's water level was recorded at 191.11 meters high, barely within the 193-meter spillage level, when officials released water at 11 a.m. on Sunday, National Irrigation Administration flood forecasting officer Edwin Pasion said.

Disaster officials have moved 1,000 families to higher grounds in coastal towns of Palanan, Divilacan, Maconacon and Dinapigue.

The military formed Task Force Mina, composed of volunteers and soldiers from Cagayan Valley, Cordillera, Ilocos and Nueva Ecija, to help in the rescue operations.

In southern Isabela, heavy rains and gusty winds in San Agustin town prompted town officials to stop ferry boat operations along the Cagayan River, Mayor Virgilio Padilla said.

In Cagayan, residents from low-lying areas in Tuguegarao City and Enrile, Solana, Lal-lo and Amulung towns have moved to safer grounds.

In Oriental Mindoro, Calapan Mayor Paulino Leachon said the Bucayao River protection dike should be able to withstand pressure from water overflows and there was no reason for people to be afraid unless there was massive rainfall, like the one that occurred in 2005. *With reports from Cyril L. Bonabente, Jocelyn R. Uy and Christine O. Avendano in Manila; Villamor Visaya Jr., Inquirer Northern Luzon; Madonna T. Virola, Inquirer Southern Luzon; AP*

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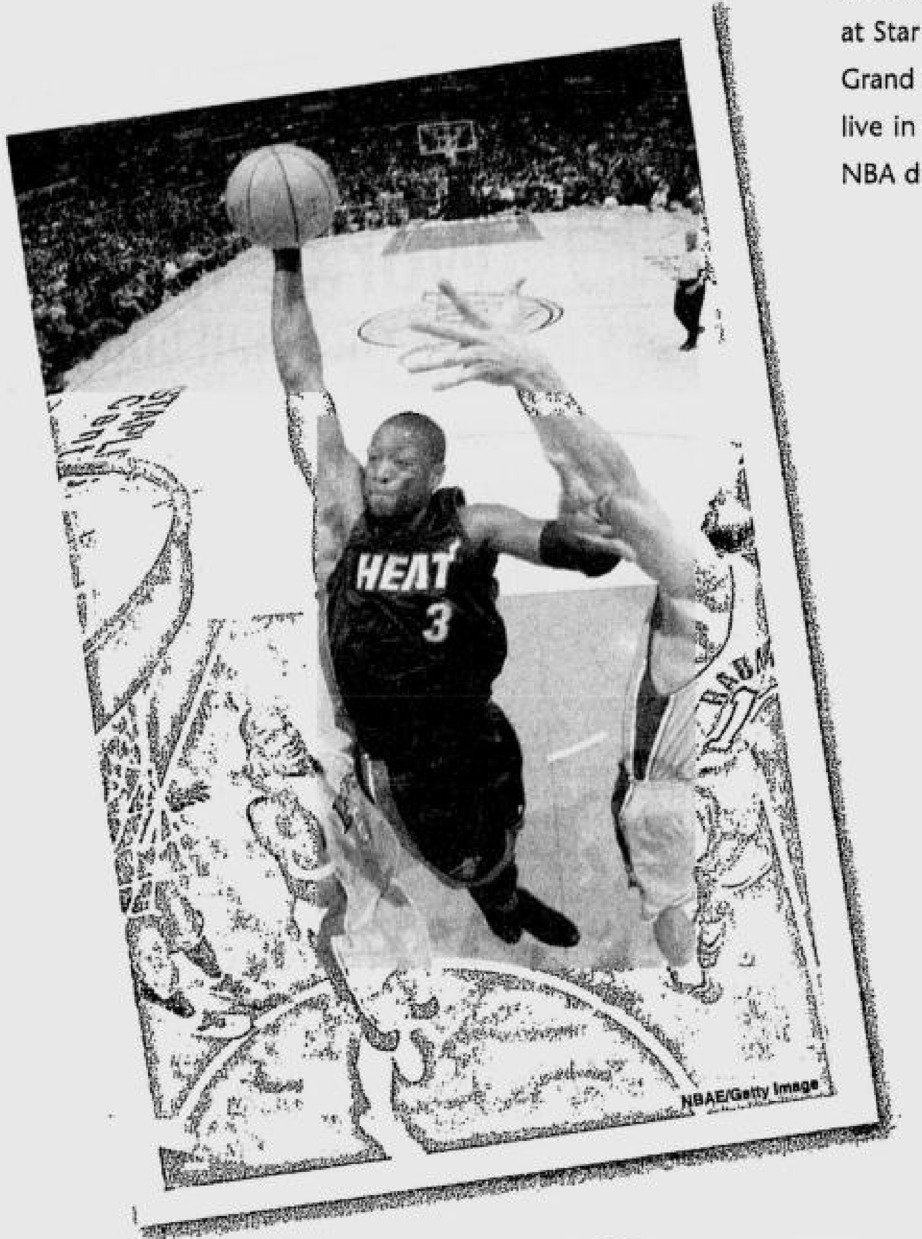

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What Drives You CALTEX

System-wide solutions needed, not band-aids

From page A1

and foremost.

To focus on quality, we need to think of student outcomes 10-15 years in the future to guide how we manage the education system today. This is not about guesswork; it is about thinking deeply about what we need to invest today to realize the change we envision in the future.

The change we want is the transformation of young children with curiosity into productive adults with competence who can contribute to a competitive economy. Today, we are the opposite—a small percentage of competent adults who can think for themselves and a largely uncompetitive economy, by global standards.

Singapore, Taiwan and South Korea transformed themselves from low-income economies to newly developed nations by focusing on building a strong base in primary education that could translate into strong science and math middle and high school outcomes.

From this, they moved a low technology environment into the high technology society that they are today. This is also how America is reengineering its education system to focus on better literacy and stronger science and math so that "no child is left behind."

Where should we start? I suggest five disconnects in the education system that need to be dealt with immediately.

12-year cycle needed

Disconnect 1: The Philippines has a two-class education system. For the few who can afford it, an elite school education is anywhere from 12-14 years of schooling before college, including preschooling and Grade 7. For the rest, schooling—in both public and nonelite private schools—is 10 years with less than 20 percent attending preschool.

In a world where every country is going to at least 12 years of basic education to be competitive, we provide this only to those that can afford it. Under this setup, the rich will get richer; the rest will just manage to survive.

The key: The Philippines, like the rest of the world, needs to move to a 12-year basic education cycle for all—not 10 years—excluding preschool. We are now the last country in Asia that requires only 10 years of basic education before university.

Teachers not paid enough

Disconnect 2: Teachers are subsidizing public and private education with their low pay. We talk about education getting the largest departmental share of our budget. In truth, the real measure is how much we spend per child—around $150 per year.

Thailand spends six times as much; Malaysia, over 10 times more. If we are not spending more per child, how are we able to survive? In reality, it is our teachers who are actually subsidizing parents through low salaries.

The key: A multiyear program to gradually raise teacher pay in both public and nonelite private schools to reflect the real cost of education and to attract the brightest graduates into the teaching profession.

Set entry age at 6

Disconnect 3: Filipino children are starting school too late, leading to high dropout rates later.

In 1995, entry age for Grade 1 was set at 6 years. A decade later, only a little more than a third of all Grade 1 pupils are 6 years old (the "right age": 38 percent); more than a third are slightly older at 7 years (39 percent); the rest are overage at 8 years or older (23 percent) [school year 2005-06]. Why does this matter?

In Grades 1-3, the right-age kids are the ones dropping out most because of poor health and nutrition. But from Grades 5 onward through the end of high school, it is the overage kids who are dropping out in larger numbers.

Once the right-age kids get to Grade 4, they are the ones who will most likely finish the entire basic education cycle. The large number of dropouts from Grades 5 on through high school are overage kids leaving for a variety of reasons, including peer pressure (*hiya*), poor achievement, or the lure of work.

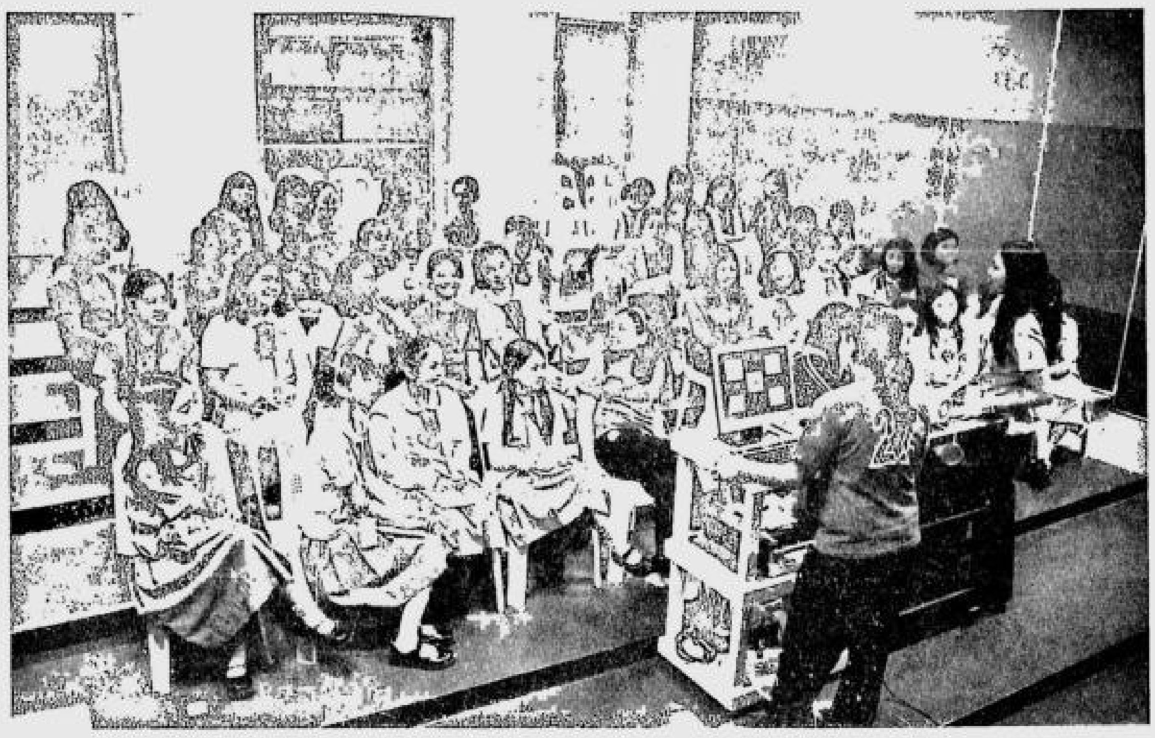
The key: Get kids to school at age 6 and initiate in-school feeding—not rice distribution—to lessen the dropout rate in Grades 1-3. Once these kids get to Grade 4, their chances of finishing basic education are markedly better than overage kids.

Male underachievers

Disconnect 4: We are fast becoming a nation of male underachievers.

From Grades 5 through the end of high school, boys are dropping out 2 to 2.5 times more than girls. By the end of high school, there are as much as 6 percent more girls graduating nationwide.

On top of this, more girls are interested in going to college than boys (58 percent to 52 percent). Within this generation, girls will have a better education than boys and the job market will reflect this. In our male-oriented society, where husbands are considered heads of household, there will be increasing levels of domestic violence and spousal abuse.



GRADE 4 pupils of Miriam College in Quezon City attend a class at the school's Library Media Center, which has the the latest computer and audiovisual equipment. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

The key: Find ways to keep boys in school, including the use of school sports and technical-vocational education as incentives. Dropouts lose out in society.

Muslim kids left behind

Disconnect 5: Muslim Filipino children are not getting half the education other Filipino children are getting.

Mindanao lags behind the rest of the country in terms of education and other indicators. Areas with significant Muslim-Filipino populations lag even further behind. In the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao, less than 30 percent of all children who enter Grade 1 will complete Grade 6. Less than half that number will finish high school. This is a continuing recipe for disaster.

The key: Increased investment in a competency-based madaris education system.

The solutions to the disconnects have to be a combination of making additional investments in the right place and in the correct manner, and enacting proper policy and implementation.

For the first time in this administration, education spending is gaining ground, thanks to a multiyear budget planning process introduced four years ago and adopted by the economic and budget planning agencies. But raising revenues is not sufficient if it is not linked to outcomes.

The only outcome that matters is graduating with achievement. That is the first step to competence. Education has to be about quality keeping pace with quantity.

Elite education

In this country, an elite school education is available for the few who can afford it, giving their children anywhere from 12-14 years of schooling before college.

For the rest, basic education is limited to 10 years of elementary (six grades) and high school (four years). A small percentage of these (less than 20 percent) add another year with preschool, giving them 11 years of basic education.

Who do you think scores better in college placement exams and will be better equipped for work?

In contrast, the rest of the world has moved to a minimum of 12 years of basic education, excluding preschool and/or kindergarten. Worldwide, the experience is: More years of basic education is good for a country as a long-term poverty reduction and development strategy.

Here, except for the rich, everybody else is being given less education and expected to do well.

Postwar situation

After World War II, a decision was made in 1946 to expand basic education from 11 to 12 years in keeping with the rest of the developed world (six years elementary, two years junior high, four years senior high). To set this in motion, the first step was to take away Grade 7 (making elementary "complete"). At that point, however, nothing else was added.

Thus, while the rest of the world marched forward to a 12-year basic education; we "retreated" to a 10-year cycle.

Why 12 years?

When a child enters Grade 1 at age 6, he or she will graduate from high school at 18 years of age. Psychologists the world over concur that at 18, a child is a young adult capable of making logical decisions and choices. This is the "age of majority" (legal age) for many countries and the age when they can first vote.

At age 18 and with 12 years of basic education, other countries assume that the individual is also ready to work. Thus, this is the age at which an individual is given full protection under the law to engage in full-time gainful employment.

Question of maturity

In the Philippines, we start Grade 1 at 6 years (as a policy, not necessarily in fact). After 10 years, a high school graduate is 16 years old. Two questions immediately pop up: Are these graduates ready for university? Will you hire them if they choose not to go to university?

The first is a question of maturity; the second of competence. The answer to both is no.

Universities will accept 16-year-old high school graduates. But the freshman year of "general education" is actually a repeat of high school courses: algebra (Math 101), grammar (English 101) and general science.

Most university degrees today cannot be completed in the four years that represent the global norm because of a freshman year of "review." Accounting is now a five-year course, engineering is stretching to six years; other courses now include summer sessions to keep within the four years.

Few employers hire 16-year-olds unless for menial or domestic work. Even Jollibee and McDonalds require at least two years of university. Why? Those two years, plus the 10-year basic education cycle, adds up to the 12 years that constitute the cycle elsewhere.

'Smorgasbord' learning

Our basic education curriculum (BEC) is patterned after that in most countries. But because we compress ours into 10 years when other countries space it out over 12 years, our kids undergo what I call "smorgasbord" learning. A little bit of this, a little bit of that. Nothing deep, little learned.

The classic example is math. The BEC includes calculus in fourth year high school. Yet, 99-plus percent of our high school seniors never get to calculus. There just isn't enough material time in four years of high school to learn enough math to get to calculus. Yet it is what other countries prescribe if high school seniors are interested in getting into the hard sciences and engineering.

The sad reality is that those that have the means are spending their own resources to make sure their kids get 12 to 14 years of basic education before college. (Preschool, prep and kindergarten are not defined globally as part of basic education. But their contribution to basic learning cannot be discounted.)

Key to change

For all other Filipino households, children have to take what is available. And this is 10 years for the most part. Preschools are not part of public education (where 94 percent of elementary-age children go), except where parents get together to form one. Public schools also have no Grade 7.

Because nonelite private schools in the provinces compete with public schools, many have taken out their Grade 7 to "ease the burden on parents who cannot afford an additional year of schooling."

We are deluding ourselves in thinking that 10 years of basic education is sufficient. In a world where 12 years of basic education is the norm, we are providing this only to those that can afford it. Under this setup, the rich get richer (better); the rest will just manage to survive. In short, a two-class basic education system.

The key to change is to move aggressively to a 12-year basic education cycle available to all Filipino children. It's time to bring back a universal Grade 7 and add another year to our high school cycle.

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Court orders UP to pay construction firm P6M

THE COURT OF APpeals has directed the University of the Philippines to pay a construction firm P6 million for its work on the construction of a sewage treatment plant at the Philippine General Hospital.

It also directed the state university and J.D. Legaspi Construction to split the cost of repairing damaged electrical and hospital equipment that occurred after a feeder line supplying electricity to the PGH was struck.

The appellate court upheld the 1999 decision of the Construction Industry Arbitration Commission (CIAC) that directed the payment and allowed J.D. Legaspi to continue the construction work under its agreement with UP, and to allow the installation of the kind of pump the firm wanted.

UP and J.D. Legaspi entered into an agreement in 1993 and 1995 for the construction of the sewage treatment plant at PGH.

In March 1997, the firm's workers who were digging and excavating at the PGH grounds hit three electrical feeder lines with a jackhammer. This caused the PGH to experience a power interruption for several minutes. The damaged cables supplied power to the intensive care units, operating rooms and pay wards.

Because of the need to restore electricity, the PGH recommissioned the feeder line. Two days later, an explosion occurred in the PGH's power transformer followed by a total power interruption at the hospital and the Malate-Ermita area.

PGH asked J.D. Legaspi to repair the damaged feeder lines, transformer and other cables, which were caused by the excavation activities. J.D. Legaspi offered to repair the damaged feeder lines using a cable joining kit, but UP refused on the ground that it would violate the Philippine Electrical Code and endanger the lives of patients on life support machines and in intensive care.

In November 1997, the construction firm requested the second partial payment for services rendered, but UP refused.

The parties then began negotiations, but after failing to come to an agreement, they brought the case to the CIAC.

Leila B. Salaverria

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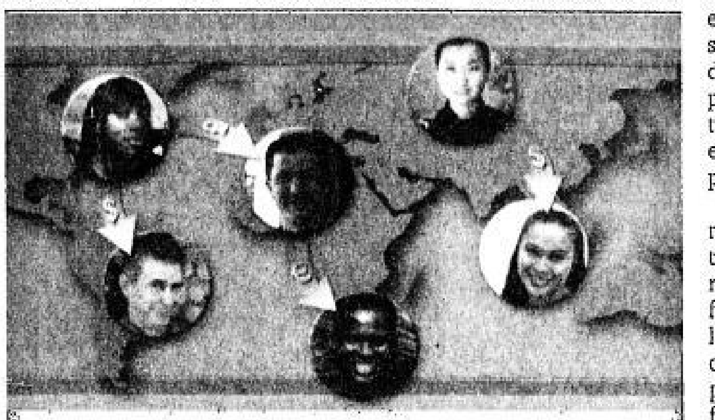

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Bicol prayer power summoned vs typhoon

From page A1

that night, "surprisingly, it changed direction."

He said Bicolanos were praying the typhoon would not cause too much damage in Aurora and Isabela, which are now facing Mina's fury. "What's good for us may not be good for them," he said.

The priest said the people would continue to pray the "Oratio Imperata for Deliverance from Calamities" until the threat from the typhoon had passed.

New faces among churchgoers were seen at the Albay Cathedral. "We noticed an increase in attendance of churchgoers in the regular Masses," Arjona said.

Imploring Jesus

Arjona explained that people were really seeking God's help and really praying. "I believe it was an answered prayer," he said.

On Saturday, after the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) announced that Mina had changed course and was headed for northern Luzon, a text message sent to Radyo Natin-Sorsogon said it was the deluge of prayers that made the typhoon turn away.

Pastor Allan Lopez, a physician by profession, said in a text message to Radyo Natin that his group, the Victory Christian Fellowship, and other congregations had dedicated Sorsogon to Jesus Christ to protect its people from the wrath of Mina.

Nothing is impossible

Lopez's group had formed "prayer warrior" groups and teamed up with the Intercessor for the Philippines, whose members devote themselves to praying and seeking Divine Intervention.

Sorsogon Gov. Sally Lee, a devout Catholic, said nothing was impossible when people got together to petition the Lord for deliverance. She said prayers had long been proven to be a powerful tool in warding off evil and calamities.

Lee spent an hour praying in her office before talking to President Macapagal-Arroyo in a teleconference on Friday afternoon.

Text messages

Doods Marianito, Radyo Natin-Sorsogon station manager and himself a pastor, said more than 70 percent of the text messages he received were either prayers or appeals for the people to pray.

Marianito said the messages showed the people's faith in God and proved Sorsoganons remained a deeply religious people.

"Many evacuees had been texting us seeking for help through prayers," he said.

Marianito said the volume of text messages increased after Pagasa raised storm signal No. 2 over Sorsogon. By then, thousands of residents had sought refuge in evacuation centers in the city. Most of them came from coastal villages.

NIÑO JESUS ORBETA/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

PEOPLE of Barangay Minit in Legazpi City arrive at their designated evacuation center at the Taysan Elementary School.

Going back home

Of the more than 150,000 people who had fled to evacuation centers in Albay, about 96,000 from coastal villages and flood-prone areas had been authorized to return to their homes as of Saturday.

The rest were told yesterday that they could also go back home.

Legazpi residents said the Oratio prayer distributed to the different parishes of the city was one of the reasons for the miracle. The prayer has been read during every Mass since Oct. 28.

The Oratio

The Oratio reads: "Almighty Father, we raise our hearts to You in gratitude for the wonders of creation of which we are part, for Your providence in sustaining us in our needs, and for Your wisdom that guides the course of the universe.

"We acknowledge our sins against You and the rest of creation.

"We have not been good stewards of Nature.

"We have confused Your command to subdue the earth.

"The environment is made to suffer our wrongdoing, and now we reap the harvest of our abuse and indifference.

"Global warming is upon us. Typhoons, floods, volcanic eruption, and other natural calamities occur in increasing number and intensity.

"We turn to You, our loving Father, and beg forgiveness for our sins.

"We ask that we, our loved ones and our hard earned possessions be spared from the threat of calamities, natural and man-made.

"We beseech You to inspire us all to grow into responsible stewards of Your creation, and generous neighbors to those in need.

"Amen."

'I hate you, Mina' text ...

From page A1

bay residents yesterday after Typhoon "Mina" suddenly changed its course.

The full text joke was: "I hate you, Mina! *Ano ba talaga? Saan ka ba talaga? MINA-luya, MINA-kusog, MINA-uran, MINA-paros! Ano daw kun MINA-layas ka na sana!* (Where are you really, Mina? You slow down, you gain strength, you bring rains, you bring winds. What if you just go away!)"

"Mina" is a Bicol prefix added to a verb to denote an action in the present tense.

Mina was also fondly nicknamed "Ara Mina" by some residents.

When Albay folk sent text messages to radio shows to ask about the latest weather update, they would say, "*Kumusta na si* Mina (How is Mina)?" referring to the typhoon as if it were a person.

Coping mechanism

Dolly Laguilles, sociology professor in Bicol University here, said the text jokes were the people's way of coping with the stress caused by preparations to avoid the typhoon's wrath.

"You see the humor of the Filipino? It's a good coping mechanism as long as it maintains respect toward other people," Laguilles said.

She, however, lashed out at the comment made by a male radio announcer, who on Saturday morning compared Mina's erratic behavior to that of a woman.

"He was saying it was typical for Typhoon Mina, just like a woman, to change her mind," Laguilles said.

Sexual innuendo

She added that jokes were circulating through text messages that Mina could not move "*dahil napapatungan pa siya ni* Lando (because Lando was on top of her)."

Lando hit the Visayas before Mina did.

"It was a sexual innuendo. Women are always subjected to [this] in macho conversations," Laguilles, a feminist, told the INQUIRER in a mobile phone interview.

Although male names were now being used to name typhoons, she said, gender bias still prevailed as reflected in the sexist comments and jokes.

She added there was a need to educate people to be more gender-sensitive.

Human traits

Laguilles said it could be the "*baransagan*" (name-calling) culture that made it easy to associate typhoons with people.

"No mother would want to name her children Reming or Sisang," she said.

She noted that people easily associated Typhoon Mina with Ara Mina, a popular celebrity.

But more than that, Laguilles said, typhoons were also believed to have a quality of "spontaneity" just like human beings.

She said typhoons could be associated with emotions of people who could go into a frenzy or who could get angry.

Not all that bad

Laguilles said a Bicol historian once wrote that the typhoons that frequented the Bicol peninsula were not all that bad.

She said the historian, whose name she could not recall, wrote something like this: "The Bicol region was abundantly blessed with natural wonders, God had to invent typhoons to balance everything."

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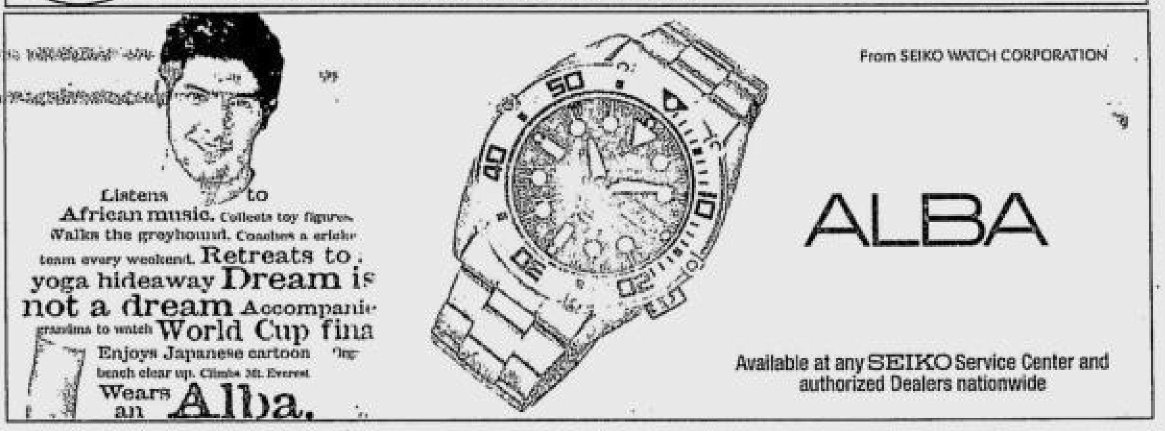

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MILF sees peace pact by August 2008

COTABATO CITY—The Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) yesterday said a final peace agreement with the government might be signed on or before the August 2008 elections in the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (ARMM).

Eid Kabalu, MILF civil-military affairs chief, said by phone that the prediction is also being shared by the government after the peace panels managed to overcome the sticky issue of the territorial composition of the Bangsamoro Juridical Entity (BJE).

"That's the time table of both panels. When that happens, no elections will be held in the ARMM next year," Kabalu said.

Mohagher Iqbal, MILF chief negotiator, declined to name the specific areas to be included in the agreed territory except to say that it would be bigger than the current ARMM, which has six provinces and two cities.

"We can't share to the media the exact details of our meeting. What is important is that the negotiation is moving," Iqbal said.

Asked if the August peace pact would push through, Iqbal said it would really depend on the moves the government will take.

"It's up to [the government] how they will fulfill their promises to us during our recent meeting in Malaysia," he said.

The agreement on the composition of the BJE was met with opposition by many sectors in Mindanao saying the government has again left them in the dark.

Among the sectors calling for the inclusion of their areas from the BJE is the Subanon tribe in the Zamboanga peninsula.

During a recent meeting of tribal leaders in Pagadian City, the Subanons said the Zamboanga peninsula was never part of the Moro ancestral domain.

Secretary Jesus Dureza, presidential assistant on the peace process, tried to allay fears about the BJE areas.

Dureza said the government uses the Constitution as basis for the negotiations, which means that any area to be created will be submitted to voters for approval during a plebiscite to be called for the purpose.

Iqbal said it was up to the government to amend the law that created the ARMM.

The ARMM was made part of the 1996 peace agreement with the Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF).

Hatimil Hassan, MNLF interim vice chair, recently told the INQUIRER the agreement on territory between the government and the MILF violated the 1996 peace pact.

"We have been talking with our brothers in the Moro National Liberation Front to consolidate the two groups' positions on key issues that have impact on the lives of the people. Some of them are against and others are supportive. We need to unite and sacrifice for the sake of the people," Kabalu said of Hassan's statement.

Meanwhile, the MILF announced the release on Nov. 28 of a 250-page book that detailed the "ups and downs" of its 10-year peace negotiations with the government.

The book, titled "Long Road to Peace: Inside the GRP-MILF Peace Process," was authored by Salah Jubair and some members of the government's peace panel. Jubair is the pseudonym of a ranking MILF leader involved the talks.

Jeoffrey Maitem and Edwin Fernandez, Inquirer Mindanao

KALIMUNDAN FESTIVAL

These B'laan women are among the 24 indigenous peoples of Mindanao that gathered from Nov. 18 to 25 for the Kalimundan Festival held in Magsaysay Park, Davao City. The tribes brought down with them materials and their own furniture and kitchenware and rebuilt their homes for the festival. YVETTE LEE / CONTRIBUTOR

Kin fear disappearance of blast suspect's wife

ZAMBOANGA CITY—RELATIVES OF Rosebie Francisco Indama, wife of Batasan blast suspect Ikram Indama, were getting more worried as her whereabouts remained unclear, a Basilan police official said.

The police official, who requested anonymity, said they have been trying but failed to locate Rosebie since Ikram disappeared with soldiers on Nov. 19.

"We have checked with her relatives but all of them were also worried as she has been missing since Nov. 19," the police officer said.

According to the lawman, Rosebie went to the Lamitan police on Nov. 18 to seek protection because armed men allegedly started to trail her after her husband was tagged as one of the Batasan bombers.

The said explosion killed Basilan Rep. Wahab Akbar and three other persons.

Chief Insp. Allen Democrito, Lamitan City police chief, confirmed that Rosebie went to seek police protection on the said date.

"She went to our office and reported that suspicious people were following her around," Democrito said.

The following day, Marine soldiers led by a Col. Macadio took Rosebie into military custody, he said.

Nothing had been heard of Rosebie since then.

But Maj. Gen. Nelson Allaga, commander of the Western Mindanao Command, said he has no knowledge about Rosebie being in military custody.

"I don't know anything about that," Allaga, who has jurisdiction over military units in Basilan, said. *Julie S. Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao*

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ROUNDUP

Rizal residents flee homes after landslide

CAMP VICENTE LIM, Laguna—Police have ordered a force evacuation of residents from two villages hit by a landslide in Pililla, Rizal on Friday.

Chief Supt. Ricardo Padilla Jr., Calabarzon police chief, said he has directed the chief of police in Pililla to visit Barangay Malaya and Barangay Niugan to oversee the evacuation of hundreds of families living near the landslide site.

He said the evacuation started before noon, about five hours after the landslide took place near the Batlag Falls in Barangay Niugan at around 7 a.m. Padilla said nobody was injured in the incident. He said incessant rains brought by typhoon "Lando" might have caused the landslide.

Marlon Ramos, INQUIRER Southern Luzon

2 killed for motorcycle robbery

COTABATO CITY—Two suspected motorcycle thieves were killed while another suspect was injured during a shootout with police in Kabacan, North Cotabato on Nov. 22.

Kabacan police investigator SPO2 Romulo Eugenio said the suspects poked a gun at Barangay Poblacion chairman Herlo Guzman around 8 p.m. and fled with the former's motorcycle.

Eugenio said the police, in pursuit operations, caught up with the suspects near Barangay Kayaga but instead of yielding, fired at the pursuing lawmen.

One of the suspects died on the spot while his two companions were injured, Eugenio said. One of the injured suspects died while being treated at a hospital.

Meanwhile, the city police said it had arrested 10 members of a car theft syndicate with "connections inside the Land Transportation Offices in Region 12 and the Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao."

City police chief Senior Supt. Willie Dangane said one of the syndicate's contacts in LTO offices in Central Mindanao "facilitates the issuance of fake registration papers." *Charlie C. Señase, Inquirer Mindanao*

Fake P1000 bills in Davao

MALITA, Davao del Sur—Police in the province issued an alert against fake P1,000 bills after two cases of counterfeit money changing hands were reported here.

Chief Insp. Nasruddin Tayuan, Malita police chief, said they believed that the persons who victimized storeowners Aileen Martinez on Saturday, and Arlene Leocario on Tuesday, were not natives of this town.

Tayuan said follow up investigation revealed that storeowners in other parts of the province were also victimized, probably by the same group.

Orlando Dinoy, Inquirer Mindanao

Building collapses; 2 dead

DAVAO CITY—A father and his son were killed, another worker was missing, while three others were injured when a building being constructed along Dacudao Ave. in Barangay Agdao here suddenly collapsed at about 11 a.m. on Nov. 20.

City Fire Marshall Wilberto Rico Niel Kwantiu said the building was an extension of the Five Star Surplus and Hardware Inc. owned by Marcelino Loto.

"The structure being built had a permit. We are still investigating the cause of the collapse," Kwantiu said.

Engr. Gloria Lumapas, chief of the building permit enforcement division of the Davao City Engineer's Office, said they have summoned the building's engineer. *Dennis Jay C. Santos and Rizalene Acac, Inquirer Mindanao*

Oil firms asked to demolish depots

GENERAL SANTOS CITY—Mayor Pedro Acharon Jr. yesterday said oil companies have to demolish their depots in Barangay Bula here on or before April 2008, the end of the 5-year grace period given to them to find new sites.

Acharon said the city government could no longer give extension to Chevron, Shell and Petron because the grace period was more than enough. The oil depots were ordered demolished when the city council approved a new zoning ordinance, which identified Bula as a commercial area. Acharon said the presence of the oil depots in Bula pose risks to the safety of the area.

Mark Quebral, spokesperson for Chevron, said the demolition would result in the increase of fuel prices in Central Mindanao. Because building new depots would be costly, oil companies will have to source their fuel from other areas, which will mean additional transportation cost.

Aquiles Zonio, Inquirer Mindanao

STONE PICKERS
Residents of the coastal village of Luna, La Union gather various kinds and sizes of stones which they sell for exporters. Most of their products were being exported to Japan. Stone picking has been a decade long livelihood of most of the residents. EUSEBIO G. AGUINALDO/CONTRIBUTOR

Bishop appeals for help for Rapu-Rapu fisherfolk

LEGAZPI CITY—LEGAZPI BISHOP Lucilo Quiambao yesterday appealed for help for the fisherfolk of the mining town of Rapu-Rapu in Albay after the provincial board issued a resolution declaring a state of calamity in all of the town's villages due to a fishkill late last month.

The resolution, which Quiambao read in his homily during a Sunday morning Mass at the Parish of St. Raphael here, said the declaration was made because of the "demoralizing socioeconomic and psychological effect and impact of the Oct. 28 fishkill."

The state of calamity was declared because the fishkill affected not only the fishermen but also 80 percent of the residents of the municipality who became "scared of eating salt-water produce from its municipal waters," the resolution added.

Quiambao echoed the appeal by the municipal councilors who stated that the fisherfolk were in need of immediate financial and food assistance from government and international funding institutions and other nongovernmental organizations.

The eight councilors who signed the resolution dated Nov. 14 were Josue Galicia, Jun-Jun Berjuega, Larry Batas, Giovanni Guapo, Wilson Guianan, Marino Barranda Jr., Erasmo dela Cruz and Noel Dagsil.

Rapu-Rapu Mayor Dick Galicia has provided 45 bags of rice to the Sta. Florentina Parish in Barangay Poblacion in Rapu-Rapu for distribution to those residents affected by the fishkill.

The local government unit, however, could not afford to provide long-term assistance for the residents affected by the fishkill whose cause has yet to be determined, added the resolution.

When Typhoon "Mina" threatened to make a landfall in Bicol, 372 families or 1,860 persons evacuated from Rapu-Rapu town in Albay.

The evacuees came from Barangay Poblacion, also the village where the string of dead fish was reportedly found during the fishkill.

The Lafayette Philippines Inc. has mining leases that cover 80 percent of the island town. *Gina Rodriguez, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Collapse of Marinduque dams feared

BOAC, MARINDUQUE—THE MARINDUQUE disaster coordinator feared that the two abandoned mine dams of the former Marcopper Mining Corp. (MMC) will collapse if a supertyphoon hits the province.

During a meeting convened by the provincial disaster coordinating council (PDCC) on Nov. 23, Dr. Josue Victoria, disaster coordinator and PDCC Task Force Mina head, said he was bothered by the status report on the dams made by the environment and natural resources office in Boac.

Two representatives each from the PDCC, the police, Army and the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office comprised the risk assessment team formed to immediately inspect and monitor the dams.

On Friday morning, the team went to the Maguila-guila Dam at Barangay Puting Buhangin in Mogpog town and at the Makulapnit Dam in Sta. Cruz town.

"Preemptive courses of action are badly needed now before it's too late. We will not wait for accidents to happen and sacrifice the lives of our people," Victoria said.

In an environmental meeting in 2006, MMC engineers admitted monitoring leaks at the structures of the Makulapnit Dam and pointed to the danger of the dam collapsing due to rapid deterioration.

With continuous rains over the past three months and the threat brought by typhoons, Victoria feared that the aging dam may burst as it could not hold additional volume of water.

Should it burst, 34 million cubic meters of water and silt would cascade towards Boac River and may cause untold catastrophe to the low-lying towns of Boac and Mogpog.

Makulapnit Dam and Maguila-guila Dam were among the dams of MMC which were identified to be in "imminent danger of collapsing" by the United States Geological Services (USGS).

The USGS concluded its two-year survey and assessment of the March 1996 MMC mine tailings spill in July 2004.

Makulapnit Dam was built to supply water for the operations of MMC mines and for household use of residences within its immediate vicinity, while Maguila-guila Dam served as the mining company's siltation dam.

The inactive dams were abandoned when MMC stopped its operation after the accidental spill in 1996. *Gerald Gene R. Querubin, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

Zamboanga town execs seek Army help for disease control

ZAMBOANGA CITY—LOCAL GOVERNMENT officials of Siayan, Zamboanga del Norte, who are trying to cope with the outbreak of Capilliariasis there, have summoned the military to help in the evacuation of affected residents.

Col. Joel Ybañez, commander of the Army's 101st Infantry Brigade based in the said province, yesterday said they have scheduled the evacuation of 177 villagers from Barangay Moyo alone to Siayan proper and to the Sindangan District Hospital starting today.

He said they were not aware of the disease until some of the militia forces and their relatives became part of the mortality figures.

He said the Capilliariasis situation in Siayan has become so alarming that "health and welfare officials have to do something."

The National Center for Health Promotion of the Department of Health defined Capilliariasis as an intestinal parasitism caused by the nematode *Capilliaria philippinensis.*

If left untreated, Capilliariasis could lead to death.

The worms can be transmitted to humans by eating raw or not thoroughly cooked fish or other marine species.

Records from the town's health office revealed that at least 70 people, including nine children, have died since April and more were being afflicted with the disease.

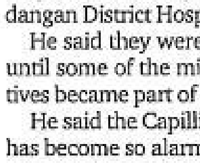
In October alone, 81 persons from various villages were found positive of Capilliaria.

"It's alarming since a big percentage of those who underwent random stool examination were found positive," Merlyn Melindo, chief nuse of the Siayan Municipal Health Office, said.

Siayan health officer Dr. Raymund Nadela said they have converted the municipal gym into a makeshift hospital to accommodate the growing number of patients because health clinics were full of patients.

"It has become a lying-in, admission, initial treatment and mass stool examination facility," Nadela said.

Local officials blamed poverty for the outbreak. Mayor Wilfredo Suasico said residents would get some of their food from rivers and lakes found hosting the Capilliaria worm. *Julie Alipala, Inquirer Mindanao*



PHILIPPINE SOCIETY OF OTOLARYNGOLOGY-HEAD AND NECK SURGERY (PSO-HNS)

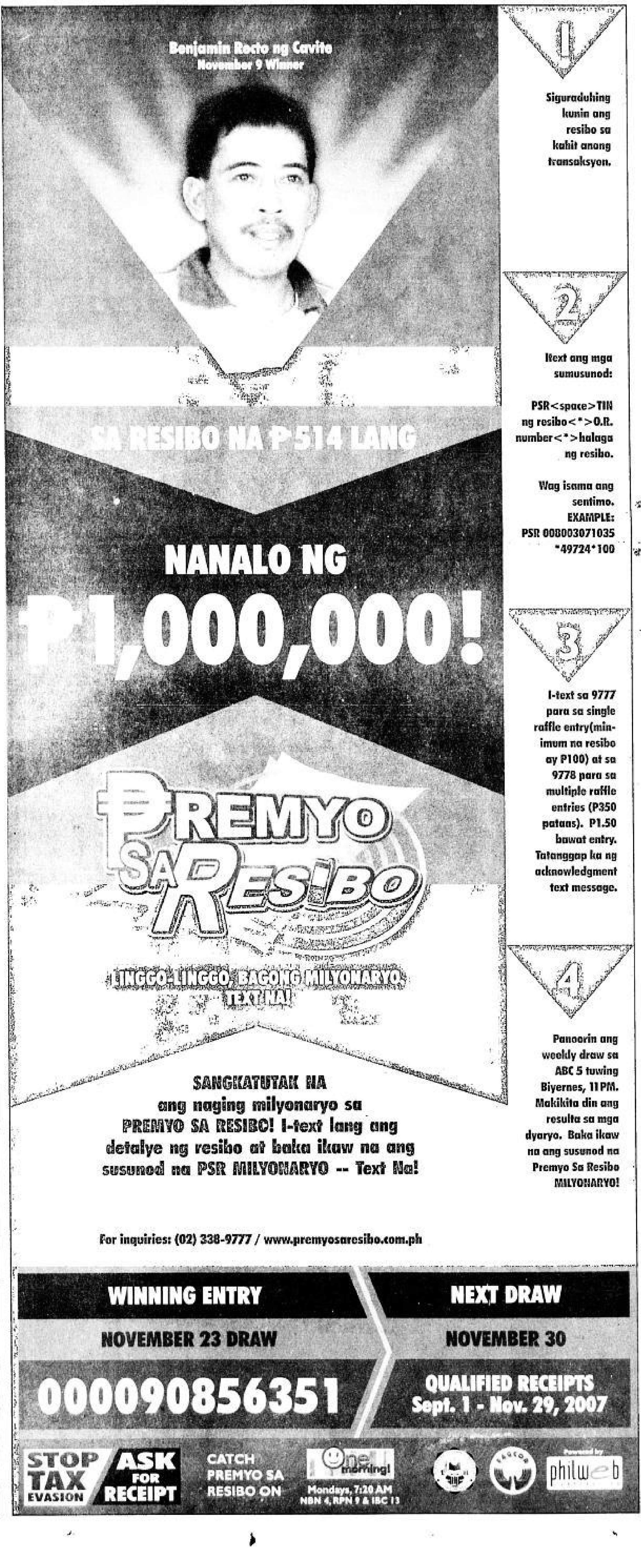
DR. EUTRAPIO S. GUEVARA JR. - On behalf of the Organizing Committee and as President of the Philippine Society of Otolaryngology- Head and Neck Surgery, it is my great pleasure and honor to invite you to the 51st Annual Convention of the PSO-HNS at Sofitel Philippine Plaza for four days from November 28 - December 1, 2007. The over-all chairman of the organizing committee is Dr. Benjamin S.A. Campomanes, Jr.

With the 12th Asian Research Symposium in Rhinology (ARSR)'s theme of "The Asian Nose: Are We Different?", we hope to provide an appropriate venue for scientific dissertations on the anatomy, physiology and disease entities inherent and unique in this part of the world. This symposium (November 28 to 29, 2007) is supported by the Philippine Academy of Rhinology under the Chairmanship of Dr. Josefino G. Hernandez and Dr. Gil M. Vicente as president of the ARSR.

On the other hand, the theme of the 51st PSO-HNS Annual Convention is "Head and Neck Oncology: Multidisciplinary Management in Targeting Cancer". We have lined up in this year's scientific sessions that will present insights on what the future of Head and Neck Oncology would be in the next generation. This 2 day convention (November 30 to December 1, 2007) will also serve as a close collaboration for head and neck surgeons, medical oncologists, radiation oncologists and other oncology specialists who deal with the holistic care of cancer patients to share with each other their wealth of experience. We have endeavored to assemble some of the world-renowned head and neck oncology specialists who will speak for us updated results, paradigm shift and latest advances in Head and Neck diagnostics and cancer therapy. Among them are Dr. Jesus Medina, USA; Dr. Patrick Gullane, Canada; Dr. Robert Lorenz, USA; Prof. K.- Kian Ang, MD, Radiation Oncologist, MD Anderson, USA; Dr. Barbara Murphy, Medical Oncologist, USA; Dr. J. Kerrebijn, Netherland; Dr. Bhuvanesh Singh, USA; Prof. Burkard Lippert, Germany; Dr. Alexander Vlantis, Hong Kong; Dr. Lalle Hammarstedt, Sweden and Dr. John Lo, Hong Kong. Our very own speakers are: Dr. Jonas Santiago, Dr. Miriam Joy. C. Calaguas, Dr. Jose Ma. Avila, Dr. Editha de Villa, Dr. Antonio Yap, Dr. Alfredo Pontejos, Dr. Jaime F. Flor, Dr. Jocelyn Jaime-Woldorf and Dr. Romulo de Villa. This is also supported by Dr. Antonio Villalon, Dr. Gerard Cornelio, Dr. Robert Fragante, Dr. Michael Mejia, Dr. Gina Panuncialman, Dr. Priscilla Caguioa, Dr. Jake Matubis, Dr. Samantha Castaneda, Dr. Jeannette Marie Matsuo, Dr. Robie Zantua, Dr. Leonardo C. Mangahas, Dr. Christine Palma, Dr. Roberto Ramos, Dr. Eduardo Tan, Dr. Enrico Tangco, Dr. Gaudencio Vega and Dr. Robert Dulay of the different oncological societies of the Philippines.

I enjoined all to actively participate in this very important event of our Society so that we can work together, learn from each other and help better serve our cancer patients.

For interested parties, fellows, consultants, residents of the Philippine Society of Oncology (PSO), Phil. Society of Medical Oncology (PSMO), Phil. Radiation Oncology Society (PROS), Phil. Academy of Head and Neck Surgery and Pain Society of the Philippines, please contact: PSO-HNS Secretariat Tel. 633-8344/633-2783 (Fax); e-mail: pso_hns@yahoo.com; website: www.psohns.org.ph/ARSR for registration and participation to the 2-day event (November 30 to December 1, 2007) at Sofitel Philippine Plaza.



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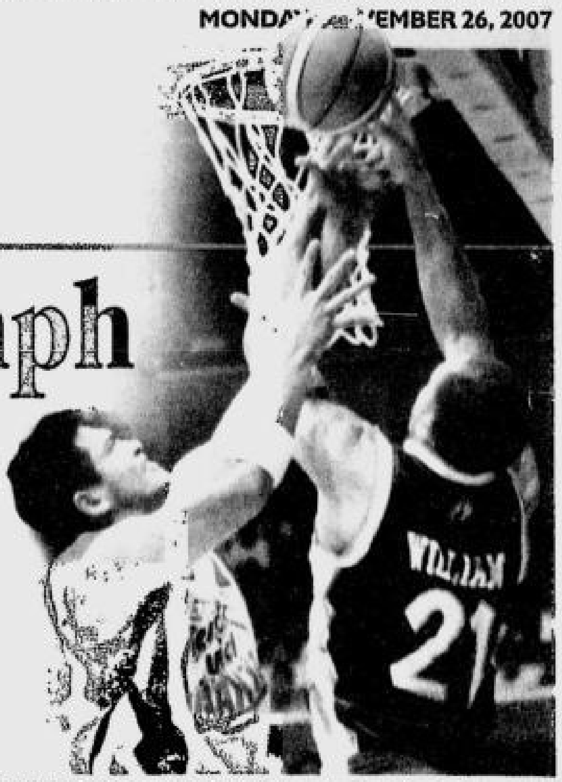
Giants top Realtors; Bulls triumph



KELLY Williams of Sta. Lucia battles Purefoods big man Romel Adducul for the rebound. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

GAMES WEDNESDAY (Araneta Coliseum)
4:35 p.m.—Alaska vs Coca-Cola
7:20 p.m.—Welcoat vs Ginebra

By Jasmine W. Payo

PUREFOODS TURNED TO ITS DEEP BENCH in forging an 84-81 triumph over Sta. Lucia in the Smart PBA Philippine Cup yesterday at the Araneta Coliseum.

Rookie guard Chico Lafiete knocked 12 points in the second half, while Rob Sanz nailed a key triple in a fourth-quarter comeback from as many as 10 points in the first half as the Giants clinched their ninth win in 10 games .

"The bench mob delivered the goods for us," said Purefoods coach Ryan Gregorio.

The Giants frustrated the Realtors' bid to win three straight games since last year and spoiled the statistical milestone of Marlou Aquino, who became the fisth player in league history to register 1,000 blocks.

The Sta. Lucia veteran posted the record by rejecting Romel Adducul's attempt at the 11:40 mark of the fourth period.

In the second game, Junthy Valenzuela hit two free throws with 1:24 left as Red Bull bucked a near-meltdown for a 109-104 victory over Talk 'N Text.

The Bulls, who blew a 21-point buffer, 65-44, in the third quarter, kept the second spot at 6-3. The Phone Pals fell to 5-5.

The scores:

First Game

PUREFOODS 84—Yap 16, Pingris 13, Lanete 12, Simon 10, Adducul 7, Raymundo 7, Sanz 6, Salvador 2, Cablay 2, Yee 0.

STA. LUCIA 81—Williams 27, Yeo 16, Espino 16, Gonzales 7, Miranda 4, Omolon 4, Reyes 3, Daa 2, Mendoza 2, Butel 0, Aquino 0.

Quarters: 14-16, 28-38, 50-53, 84-81

Second Game

RED BULL 109—Valenzuela 17, Najorda 16, Ybañez 14, Duncil 12, Baguio 11, Robinson 10, Pennisi 10, Hrabak 9, Bugia 5, Sharma 5.

TALK 'N TEXT 104—Cardona 28, Alapag 27, Washington 15, Taulava 11, Alilado 11, Aljamal 8, Ritualo 2, Belano 2, Ferreria 0, Billones 0, De Ocampo 0.

Quarters: 25-23, 58-42, 81-82, 109-104

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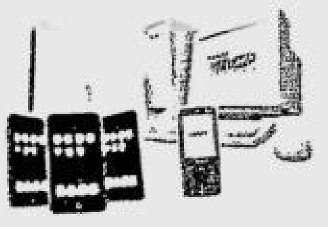

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BI chief sacks jail officials, 8 guards

By Margaux C. Ortiz

THE CHIEF OF THE BUREAU OF Immigration has relieved the jail supervisor and nine other personnel assigned at the agency's detention center in Bicutan, Taguig following reports of their alleged involvement in irregularities.

Immigration Commissioner Marcelino Libanan recently issued an order reassigning the jail supervisor, warden and eight security guards to the Law Enforcement Division of the BI main office in Intramuros.

He declined, however, to identify the affected personnel pending an administrative investigation of the complaints against them.

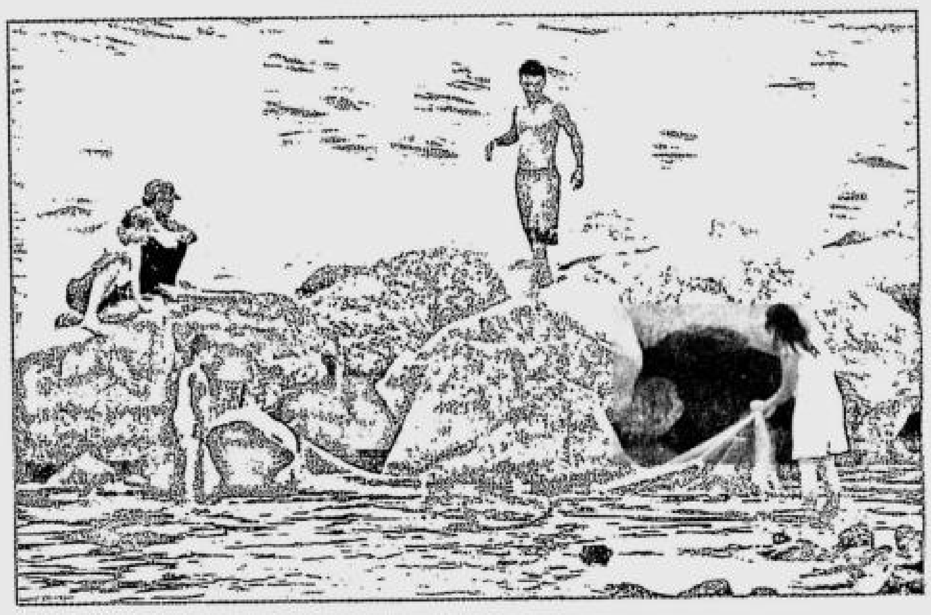
The relieved jail personnel had been implicated in anomalies such as extortion, the unauthorized escorting of prisoners out of the jail and the giving of VIP treatment to rich foreign inmates.

Libanan initiated the revamp hours after he inspected the Bicutan jail last week and held a dialogue with foreign detainees.

He warned that the revamp was just the first of a series of administrative reform measures that he would undertake to professionalize the bureau's ranks and discipline corrupt employees.

"I will not hesitate to suspend and even dismiss the jail officials and personnel from their jobs if the investigation results show that they had committed grave misconduct or conduct prejudicial to the interest of the service," he said.

Immigration personnel from the main office have taken over the relieved employees' posts. Supt. Edwin Micu was designated the new jail supervisor and acting warden of the detention center.



HOPING FOR A BITE OR TWO RODEL ROTONI
Pasay City residents try their luck at catching crabs near the seawall in Barangay Libertad.

DID YOU KNOW

A TOTAL of 132 rape cases were reported to the Metro Manila police in the first five months of 2007. The figure is 12 percent of the 1,088 cases reported nationwide from January to May this year.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

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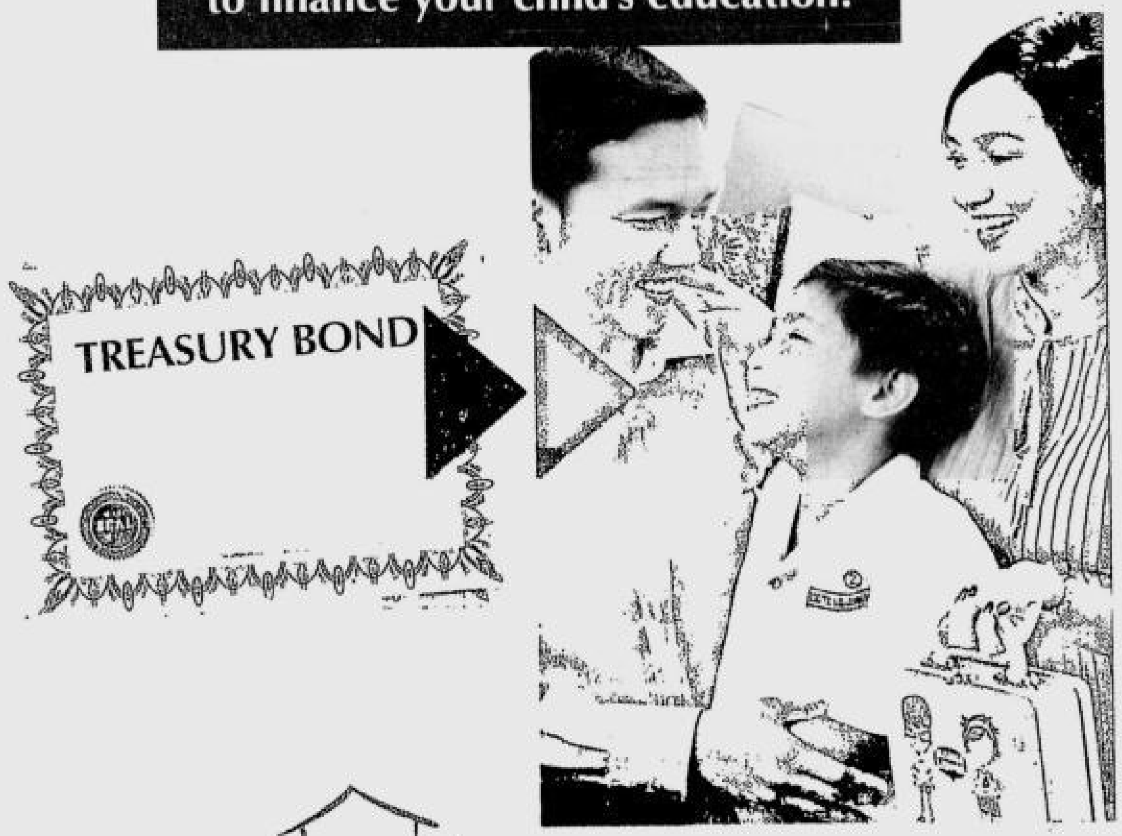

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Doctor named in estafa complaint faces probe

By DJ Yap

AN OFFICIAL OF THE MAKATI MEDICAL Center yesterday said that they do not condone any act detrimental to their patients with hospital executives set to take up today the case of one of two doctors set to be charged by the Department of Justice with large scale estafa.

MMC president and chief executive officer Richard Ferrer said that cardiologist Emelyn Abundo-Rivera and pediatrician Shirley Pascual-Ong, two of seven persons named in the complaint, were "independent, free agents" who held clinic in the hospital.

"Doctors are not employees of the hospital. They are independent free agents (who) have clinics in as many as three or five hospitals," he said in a phone interview. "Since they are not employees, the hospital does not have oversight or control over their actuations."

Even so, Ferrer said the hospital suspended Rivera's clinic privileges in August after she failed to explain her side on several patients' complaints. Ong's case, on the other hand, will be taken up today, he added.

On Friday, the justice department ordered the filing of large scale estafa charges against the two doctors, Aurora Almojuela, Gilbert Ocampo and three others identified only as John, Julie and Jenny Doe for allegedly failing to return more than P28 million in investments in a pyramiding scheme.

Ferrer said the hospital learned of Rivera's alleged solicitation of investments from patients and fellow doctors when complaints against her started piling up. In February, the hospital conducted an internal investigation and asked Rivera to explain her side, he said.

But the doctor did not report to the hospital administrators, prompting them to place her under preventive suspension in March, and finally to indefinitely suspend her clinic privileges in August, Ferrer said.

According to him, the last time Rivera was seen in the hospital was in late 2006. The hospital did not suspend Ong as there were no complaints against her, Ferrer said.

He added that the MMC has a policy that forbids doctors from engaging in activities that are detrimental to patients inside the clinic. "It is on that ground that we investigated her (Rivera)," he said.

Ferrer said the internal probe took some time because the hospital administrators were constrained by the doctor-patient confidentiality rule.

"What happens in the clinic is between the doctor and the patient. That is very private … We don't have a 'Big Brother' (who can monitor what is going on in the clinic) here," he said, alluding to the reality TV show.

METROBRIEFS

Man kills neighbor in Malabon

POLICE are looking for a man who allegedly stabbed his neighbor dead in Malabon City yesterday after the victim swore at him and made rude gestures. Samuel Gallano, 40, of Dulong Bautista Street, Carisma Village in Panghulo town, died on arrival at the San Lorenzo Ruiz Women's Hospital. He had been stabbed six times in the chest and in the back. His attacker was identified as Shandell Licanel, 25. PO2 John Benitez of the Malabon City police said that before the incident, Gallano was drinking with Rolando Garimas and Licanel when he reportedly became unruly and started cursing the suspect. Licanel left but came back with a knife and stabbed the victim. He then fled with the knife.

Jeannette I. Andrade

Manila police officials reshuffled

A REVAMP has been effected in the Manila Police District. Chief Supt. Roberto Rosales, MPD director, said the changes which took effect last Friday were aimed at "organizational improvement." Among those appointed were Supt. Alejandro Gutierrez, Field Operations Unit chief; Supt. Bernardo Diaz, from Station 11 commander to District Mobile Force director; Supt. Edgar Wycoco, head of the Criminal Investigation Detection Unit; Supt. Vicente Tan, CIDU deputy chief; Supt. Ernesto Barlam, head of the General Assignment Section and Chief Insp. Celso Mojares, Warrant and Subpoena Section chief. Chief Insp. Alejandro Yanquiling, who was relieved last week as Homicide Division chief, was appointed head of the Special Training Unit. Chief Insp. Dominador Arevalo was named as his replacement. Rosales said the reorganization was based on the performance of the police officials.

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Cops secure eastern Metro for holiday season

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Street lights a must

I TRAVEL every day on Ortigas Avenue Extension in Pasig City. In between the Ever Gotesco and Junction area, I have noticed that there are no street lights. Is it possible to install lights in the area before accidents or crime-related incidents happen?

KAYE BALANE, 27, Taytay, Rizal

Why not a pedestrian overpass in Eastwood City, Libis?

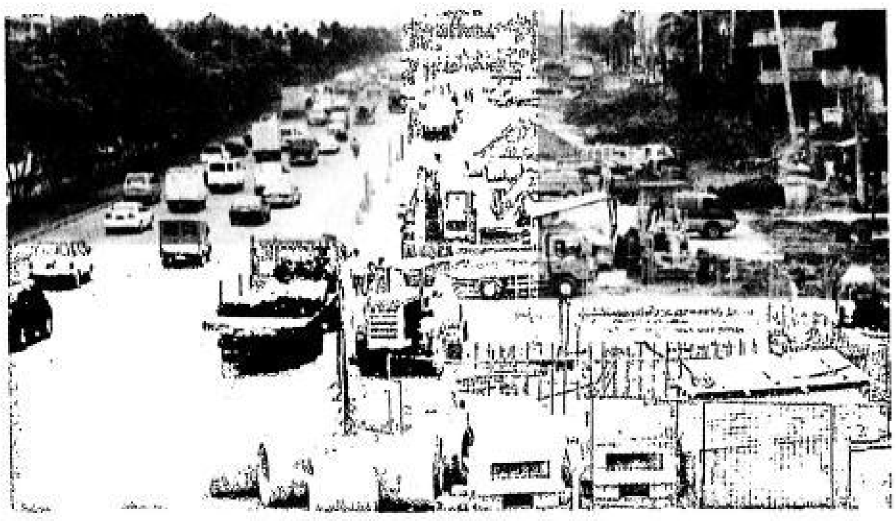
MAY WE ask Mayor Belmonte to put up a pedestrian overpass in Eastwood City, Libis, Quezon City. It is difficult to cross in front of the Acropolis Subdivision especially at night. This is a call center area.

ARNOLD GATDULA, 44, Quezon City

Busted pipe in Quezon City

THERE is a busted pipe on Quirino Highway near Mercury Drugstore on Caiña Drive, Barangay Balon-bato, Quezon City. Please act on this problem because it has been almost two months and nobody seems to care.

TESS VILLARAMA, 52, Quezon City



FROM BAD TO WORSE ERIK ARAZAS

From Dr. Robert, 29, of Novaliches, Quezon City: "I wonder if Quezon City Mayor Sonny Belmonte or any traffic control official has seen the Quirino Highway from Mindanao Avenue lately. Instead of making road improvements in portions like what they did at Edsa, they are doing it from the corner of Mindanao Avenue all the way to Holy Cross. The traffic there was already bad enough when the road was okay, but it has grown worse. Vehicles go through a bottleneck after surviving three or four lanes of chaos. Jeepneys, buses and AUVs stop anywhere they please to pick up passengers. Then you have to be careful of daredevil motor bikers who weave in and out of traffic, sometimes making counter flow moves. I see two or three traffic aides trying to do their job, without any effect. Isn't there a better way to do this? Alternate routes, truck ban, whatever! Need help badly."

By Kristine L. Alave

THE POLICE HAVE STEPPED up their security and traffic monitoring activities in the eastern part of Metro Manila ahead of the holiday season.

Senior Supt. Nilo de la Cruz, Eastern Police District director, said that more policemen have been deployed to malls and shopping complexes in the area.

He added that the tighter security measures were implemented following the explosion at the Glorietta mall in Makati City last month.

The EPD has jurisdiction over the Ortigas Business District and major malls like the Shangri-La Plaza, SM Megamall and Robinson's Galleria.

Preemptive visibility

"We have deployed all mobile and foot patrols for maximum preemptive visibility and strategic and tactical reactions to contingencies," De la Cruz said.

"We hold constant security conferences with different establishments to ensure that all concerns are addressed," the EPD chief added.

In San Juan where the Greenhills Shopping Center is located, city police chief Supt. Rodelio Jocson said he has ordered his men, accompanied by police dogs, to conduct more foot patrols in the area.

He added that the San Juan City police have coordinated with security agencies and mall officials to secure the shopping complex, one of the densest and most popular in the city for its bargain prices.

In Mandaluyong City, Mayor Benhur Abalos has asked the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority to assign more traffic personnel on Edsa, particularly in front of the Ortigas Business District.

He noted that traffic in the area is expected to grow heavier as the holiday season nears.

According to Abalos, it is necessary to put more traffic enforcers in the area, one of the busiest stretches of Edsa, as it is surrounded by malls.

BPI PARTNERS WITH XOOM.COM FOR FASTER BANK REMITTANCES TO THE PHILIPPINES

The Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI) has formed a strong alliance with XOOM Corporation, one of the world's fastest growing online money transfer companies.

The tie-up between the convenient Internet-based money transfer service of XOOM and BPI, ranked the Philippines' number one bank in remittance volume, is a perfect alliance. Millions of overseas Pinoys can now send money directly to their loved ones' BPI account with the simple click of a mouse. The money sent will be available to the recipient in just hours.

"BPI welcomes this partnership with XOOM Corporation on behalf of millions of overseas Filipinos. XOOM, the internet-based facility to send money to the Philippines should certainly excite Pinoys abroad as a most convenient way to remit to their loved ones in the Philippines," said BPI President Aurelio R. Montinola III.

The popularity of XOOM has increased within the computer-savvy Filipino community. Remittances that used to take days to send can be credited to the beneficiary's BPI account within hours through XOOM's proprietary technology.

"As a kababayan, I know speed is the key. Pinoys prefer that money sent to loved ones gets to them fast. With XOOM, the money is in a BPI account within hours," said Gene Gutierrez, XOOM.com Regional Vice President, Philippines.

Remitting money to a BPI account with XOOM is easy. Simply log on to XOOM's website at www.XOOM.com, enter sender and recipient information, the recipient's BPI account details, and the amount to be remitted. Then, choose a payment method - bank account, credit/debit card or PayPal - and click "send." The money will be available in the recipient's BPI account within a few hours.

XOOM ensures that financial transactions coursed through their system are highly secure as the company uses state-of-the-art technology to protect the client's personal data.

"Our Filipino customers just love the advantages of using the Internet to send money to the Philippines. They no longer have to deal with the hassles of working with a remittance centers' schedule. Sending money online is the next evolution, and XOOM continues to be at the forefront of this paradigm shift," says John Kunze, XOOM CEO and President.

With further plans for growth and expansion, XOOM.com continues to lead the way in serving the money remittance needs of the Filipino-American community. And just like in their commercials, there is indeed plenty to love about this new wave of remitting money to the Philippines.

ABOUT XOOM.COM

XOOM.com allow individuals to send money from any Internet-enabled computer to family, friends and businesses worldwide. XOOM Corporation was founded in 2001 in San Francisco and is backed by leading venture firms Sequoia Capital, New Enterprise Associates and Fidelity Ventures. (www.xoom.com.)

ABOUT BPI

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Signing the partnership between BPI and XOOM Corporation are (from left) BPI Senior Vice President Teresita B. Tan, BPI President Aurelio R. Montinola III, Xoom President John Kunze, and XOOM Senior Vice President Gene Gutierrez. Also in photo are (standing from left) BPI Senior Manager Melinda Dulay, BPI Senior Vice President Raul Dimayuga , XOOM Senior Vice President Julian King and BPI Senior Vice President Reinier Jeongco.

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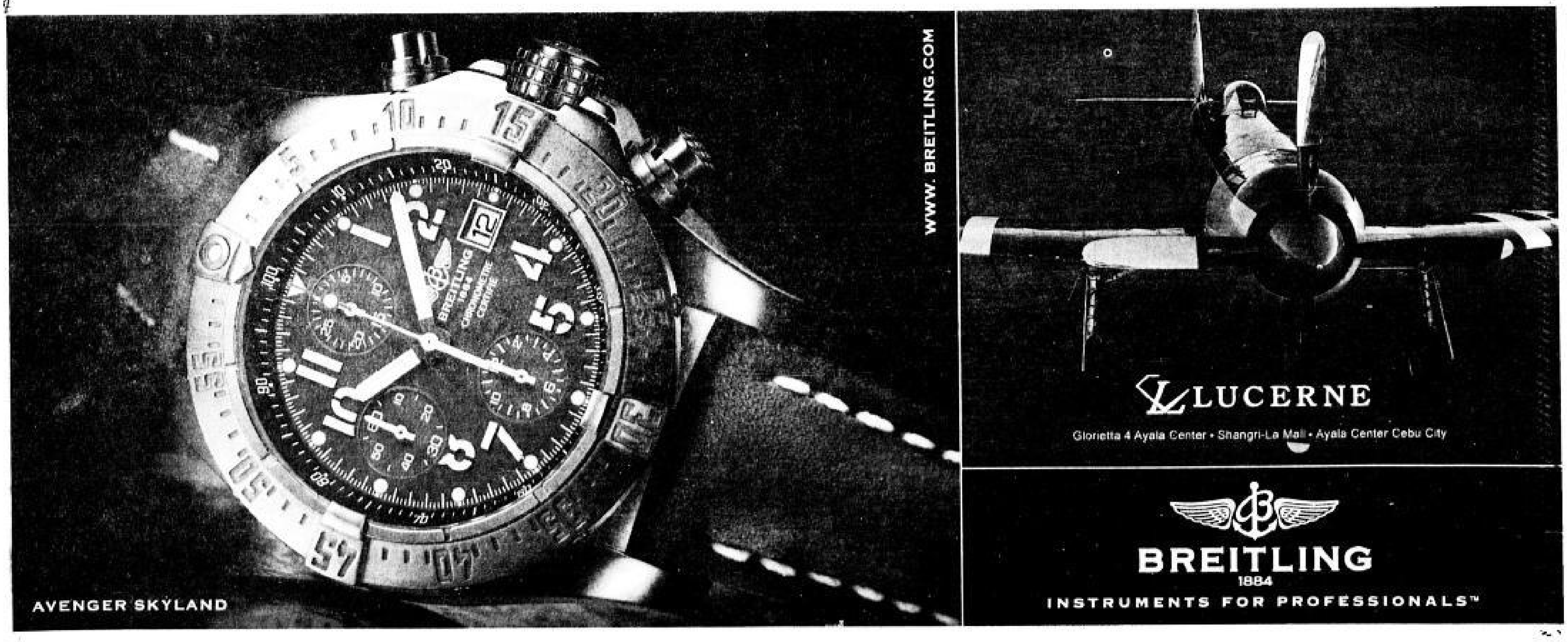

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US revising plan for penalizing hirers of illegals

WASHINGTON—THE GOVERNMENT says it will rewrite rules for penalizing employers of illegal immigrants to try to satisfy a federal judge in San Francisco who put the crackdown on hold.

US District Judge Charles Breyer stopped the Bush administration last month from going ahead with enforcement of regulations requiring employers to fire workers if their Social Security identification numbers did not match records and the discrepancies could not be addressed in 90 days.

In issuing the temporary injunction, the judge said the Social Security database contained errors that could have cost many legal workers their jobs, and the government did not properly study the effect of the rules on business.

Late Friday, Breyer agreed to a request from the administration to put the case on hold while it reworks the regulations—a process bound to put off enforcement until the spring. The judge stayed proceedings until March 24, when the government thought it could have new rules ready on how to enforce immigration laws in the workplace.

Business, labor and civil liberties groups had sued to stop the "no match" rules, arguing the plan would trap companies and workers in a costly bureaucratic nightmare.

In its motion, the administration acknowledged that the judge had found "serious questions on the merits" raised by the case. "A stay will prevent the waste of judicial resources in litigating over a rule that is in the process of being revised," the administration's brief said. "Defendants hope and anticipate that the amended rule will fully address the Court's concerns."

The plan is meant to expose illegal immigrants who get jobs by giving out fake Social Security numbers and penalize companies that employ them. Nothing in the brief suggested the government would ultimately back away from a "no match" plan as it looked for ways to make enforcement pass legal muster.

In September, a month after the plan was announced, the government had about 140,000 letters ready to be sent to employers, each identifying 10 or more employees with mismatches in their records. But the case stopped enforcement from proceeding. Breyer issued the injunction Oct. 10. *AP*

Stars flee as wildfire guts homes, ravages Malibu

LOS ANGELES—HOLLYWOOD stars were among thousands of people forced to flee as wind-driven wildfires tore through the celebrity enclave of Malibu Saturday, gutting nearly 50 multimillion dollar homes and threatening hundreds more, officials and reports said.

Fires erupted at around 3:30 a.m. officials said, spreading rapidly through tinder-dry brush as winds packing gusts of up to 80 km fanned the inferno, the second major blaze to hit Malibu in a month.

By 5 p.m. around 1,880 hectares (4,650 acres) had been scorched and 51 buildings, including 49 homes, had been destroyed. A further 27 structures had been damaged, Los Angeles County Fire Department officials said.

A drop in winds allowed firefighters to make inroads into the blaze, which was now 25 percent contained, officials said.

Los Angeles County fire chief Michael Freeman told a press conference late Saturday that firefighters expected to reach 50 percent containment on Sunday provided weather conditions remained favorable.

"A lot will be dependent on the weather conditions tonight, which, based on the predictions, is pretty good," he said. He said he expected fire crews to be deployed for "five days at least."

Around 1,700 firefighters were deployed to tackle the fires throughout Saturday, backed up by 23 aircraft including water-dropping helicopters and a DC-10 which was pummeling the infernos with flame retardant.

As darkness fell, most of the fixed wing aircraft were grounded for safety reasons but many ground crews remained in place, Freeman said. Six firefighters had suffered minor injuries during the fires, officials said.

Freeman extended sympathy for homeowners who had seen property destroyed but expressed relief that the drop in winds later Saturday had allowed firefighters to begin containing the fire.

"We've got to be very thankful that the winds died down … We certainly dodged a bullet," he said. "It could have been far, far worse than it was. *AFP*

A STRUCTURE burns behind a statuary, one of several homes lost or damaged in the Corral Canyon area of Malibu, Calif., Nov. 24. AP

Mideast rivals head to US meet with no illusions

JERUSALEM—HARDENED BY years of bloodshed and embittered by past failures, Israel and the Palestinians head to a key US peace meeting cautiously hoping to narrow their ever-yawning gaps at last.

US President George W. Bush has pledged that the conference in Annapolis outside Washington on Nov. 27 will provide international support for the two sides to restart talks after a seven-year freeze marred by deadly violence.

But chances of the conference—which is taking place 60 years after the UN voted to partition British-mandate Palestine on Nov. 29, 1947—are far from certain although it is likely to see Israel sit down with Arab states including regional powerhouse Saudi Arabia for the first time.

Both the Israeli and Palestinian leaders are politically weak, the Palestinians are bitterly divided, and the core issues of their decades-long conflict—borders, refugees and Jerusalem—remain as intractable as ever.

"With weak Israeli and Palestinian leaderships, inhospitable political environments, intra-Palestinian conflict, a polarized region and a US administration consumed by Iraq and Iran, prospects are uneven at best," said the International Crisis Group, a Brussels-based think-tank.

"But the decision to jettison the incremental approach and deal with the endgame gives some, however fragile, reasons for hope," it said.

The domestic weakness of both Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert raises doubts about their ability to make the tough concessions needed for a final settlement, let alone implement it.

Olmert's poll ratings have sunk as a result of last year's Lebanon war and a string of corruption scandals, while Abbas has lost control over the Gaza Strip—the smaller half of the promised Palestinian state—after the bloody takeover of the territory by the Islamists of Hamas in mid-June.

Seven years after the Camp David peace talks presided by then President Bill Clinton disintegrated and plunged the region into a new cycle of violence, the two sides remain deeply divided on core issues.

Intensive negotiations on a joint declaration for the Annapolis meeting have failed to produce agreement on the document meant to serve as basis for the talks on a permanent settlement that are supposed to follow the conference.

The disagreements between the negotiators are such that they have not been able to agree on what to call their declaration, with Israelis wanting "joint statement" and Palestinians "joint document," according to a draft published in the press.

Other rifts center on a timeline of the final-status negotiations: Who will oversee implementation of commitments; what will serve as reference points for the negotiations; and how to phrase the end goal of negotiations. *AFP*

Secret report: US goals in Afghanistan not met

WASHINGTON—THE WHITE House concluded in a recent secret report that the war effort in Afghanistan has not met strategic goals set this year, The Washington Post reported Sunday.

The newspaper, citing unnamed US officials, said the report was prepared earlier this month by the National Security Council.

Its main conclusion was that while individual military battles against the Taliban have been successful, other areas remain wanting, report said.

"One can point to a lot of indicators that are positive," The Post quoted a senior US intelligence official as saying.

"We go out there and achieve our objectives and kill bad guys."

But the extremists, he added, seem to have little trouble finding replacements, according to the paper.

While many foreigners, mostly Pakistani, join the Taliban, several officials said the main source of new recruits remain unhappy Afghans, The Post said.

"There doesn't seem to be a lot of progress being made … I would think that from (the Taliban) standpoint, things are looking decent," the paper quoted the intelligence official as saying. *AFP*

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Maid's 13-year ordeal highlights domestic violence scourge in Hanoi

By Tran Thi Minh Ha

HANOI—IT WAS A CASE THAT OUTRAGED a nation: For 13 years a Vietnamese couple abused and tortured a young woman they kept as a virtual slave, until she was finally rescued by a compassionate neighbor.

When Nguyen Thi Binh, 24, emerged from the family-run Hanoi noodle shop that had been her prison, her tragic story and the scars covering her body triggered outrage at the perpetrators—and anger at officials who did nothing.

The couple "used electric cables, wooden sticks and pliers to torture me," Binh told reporters and police about the couple who kept her as an unpaid maid and let her sleep only three hours a night.

The wife had kicked and beaten Binh and forced her to kneel naked in cold weather if she did not finish her cleaning and other domestic tasks, said Binh, 37 percent of whose body was found to be covered in scars.

Binh said her nightmare started when her mother dumped her in Hanoi at age 11 before leaving to marry in China. Binh never heard from her again.

Her suffering only ended after a 70-year-old neighbor spirited her away to a farm outside Hanoi.

"I felt sorry for her and had reported the abuse to local police three times, but they did nothing," said the neighbor, beef seller Ha Thi Binh, after rescuing the girl.

The restaurant owners "tortured her like Americans tortured communist soldiers during the war," the woman was quoted as telling state media.

The couple first denied, then admitted the barbarous treatment and are now in custody, charged with torture and other offenses. If convicted, they each face up to 18 years in jail.

The case, which came to light early this month and led to the sacking of several local officials, has sparked public anger. Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung ordered authorities to look into the case and report back to him by the end of November.

"It's unbelievable that there are people who mistreat children like that right in Hanoi," Tran Thi Quoc Khanh, a national assembly deputy representing Hanoi, told the VNExpress online newspaper.

The Thanh Niên daily commented: "If such a case could occur in Hanoi, in a ward that proudly bears the name of Nhan Chinh, or 'human righteousness,' it might also be happening elsewhere, waiting to be uncovered.

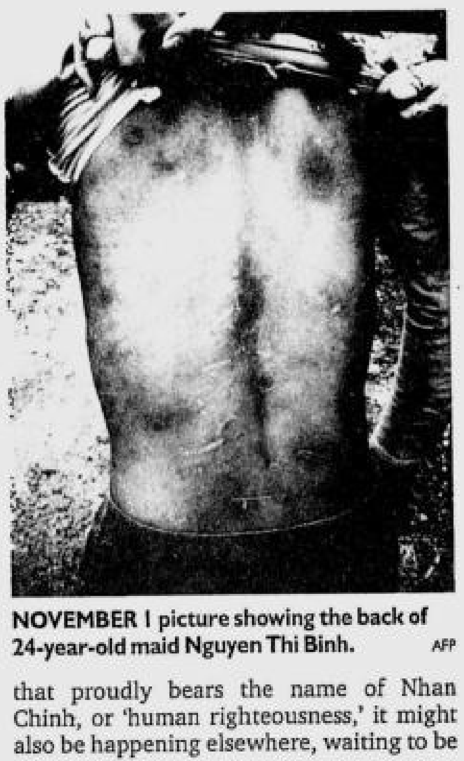
"We must face a painful truth: A 70-year-old woman could do what the massive governmental apparatus could not. If necessary, let's start a process of improving it to make it transparent and strong."

There is no evidence that the global problem of violence within families and households—highlighted this Sunday by the UN International Day to Eliminate Violence Against Women—is worse in Vietnam than elsewhere.

But debate on domestic violence in Vietnam, a traditionally male dominated society, where many families employ rural women as maids for around $50 a month, has only really started in recent years.

Binh's sad story dominated newspapers for weeks. According to the police-run An Ninh Thu Do, or Capital Security newspaper, one person dies every three days in Vietnam as a result of domestic violence.

The extreme case of Binh has done much to awaken the community to the scourge of violence in the home, said Hoang Thi Kim Thanh, head of the Centre for Studies and Applied Sciences in Gender, Family, Women and Youth. *AFP*



NOVEMBER 1 picture showing the back of 24-year-old maid Nguyen Thi Binh. AFP

The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Warming damaging meat, vegetables

HYDERABAD, INDIA—FROM MEAT, POULTRY and milk to potatoes, onions and leafy greens, everything consumed on the world's dining tables is feeling the heat from climate change, scientists say.

Researchers are trying to establish the extent to which global warming will affect livestock, plant life and staple crops such as rice to bolster their resistance to disease and breed stronger varieties.

The world's billion poor, whether producers or consumers, will bear the brunt, warned scientists who ended a conference Saturday on agriculture and climate change in Hyderabad, southern India.

"In some ways, the time for doing things is already past," said John McDermott, deputy director of research at the Nairobi-based International Livestock Research Institute. "The changes are already happening."

As an example, rift valley fever, a deadly virus transmitted to sheep, cattle, camels and humans by mosquito bites, is being fueled by climate change, the scientist said.

The virus is manifesting itself in broader swathes of East Africa and the Middle East because of climate variability in dry regions that helps vectors such as mosquitoes, tsetse flies and ticks to breed and spread, he said.

"What you see are diseases moving into areas where they have not been before, which means sometimes animals are exposed where they haven't been for a long time," he said.

"That leads to more outbreaks," McDermott added.

For the poor, livestock offers a livelihood as well as a savings bank they can tap, selling off their cows or chickens to deal with a health or family emergency.

"These are the people who don't make much of an impact on the ecological footprint of the world," said McDermott.

But they are also the people most at risk from damage wrought on livestock by diseases that could be aggravated by climate-related phenomena.

Scientists are also studying cropping and disease patterns in vegetables—potatoes and tomatoes to cabbage and spinach, onion and garlic—to see how they can cope with the stresses brought by global warming and its side-effects.

"If you make it a given that temperatures will go up, water will be a problem—that will be your worst-case scenario," said Jackie Hughes, deputy director of research at the Shanhua, Taiwan-based World Vegetable Centre. *AFP*

A CHRISTMAS tree is decorated for Yuletide celebrations in front of St. Basil Cathedral in Red Square in Moscow, Russia, Nov. 23. AP

Amateurs solve Russia's last royal mystery

YEKATERINBURG, RUSSIA—ON THE OUTskirts of this industrial center, off a road like any other, on a nowhere scrap of land—here unfolded the final act of one of the last century's most momentous events.

A short way through a clearing, toward a cluster of birch trees, the killers deposited their victims' bodies, which had been mutilated, burned and doused with acid to mask their origins. It would be 73 more years, in 1991, before the remains would be reclaimed and the announcement would ring out: The grave of the last Russian czar, Nicholas II, and his family had been found.

But the story does not end there.

Eleven people were said to have been killed that day in July 1918 on Lenin's orders. Just nine sets of remains were dug up here and then authenticated using DNA. The remains of the czar's son, Aleksei, and one daughter, whose identity is still not absolutely clear, were missing. Did their bones lie elsewhere, or could it actually be that they had escaped execution, as rumor had it for so long?

Only in the past few months have these questions apparently been resolved here, and only by a group of amateur sleuths who spent their weekends plumbing the case. In fact, it appears that the clues to what happened to the two children were always there, waiting to be found. All that was needed was to listen closely to the boastful voices of the killers.

Their accounts are in secret reports in Soviet-era archives, one of which offered the most tantalizing hint: A single phrase in the recollection of the chief killer that seemed to suggest where the two bodies might have been deposited.

"All of them wanted to leave a trace in history, for they considered that this was a kind of heroic deed," said Vitaly Shitov, who lives in the area and undertook a review of the testimony to hunt for the remains. "They wanted to promote their roles."

Following a wisp of a clue this summer, Shitov and other amateur investigators went to where the other remains had been found—and they kept walking. About 70 yards from the first burial ground, is a slightly elevated area among the trees.

It is there that the bodies of Aleksei, 13, and his sister were apparently consigned.

The amateurs found the bones, many of them charred by fire, scattered among bullets and pieces of jars that held acid used to disfigure the bodies. These fragments appeared similar to those from the first grave.

Scientists in Russia and the United States are testing the new finds extensively. The sister is believed to be Maria, 19.

If, as expected, results of DNA tests on the two sets of remains are conclusive, they would put to rest many of the doubts that have arisen in Russia and worldwide about the inquiries into what had happened to the royal family. *NYT*

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E-Games: Growing, Evolving, Expanding, Not Stopping

How long does it take to build a giant in the increasingly competitive market of PC gaming? The answer would be about 18 months.

That was about how long it took IP e-Games, the online gaming subsidiary of IPVG Corp., to go from a pure startup to market leader. In an industry dominated by access fees and price tags for installers, e-Games revolutionized the industry by introducing the free-to-play model to the Pinoy gaming scene; a model that has now become a standard in the Philippine online market.

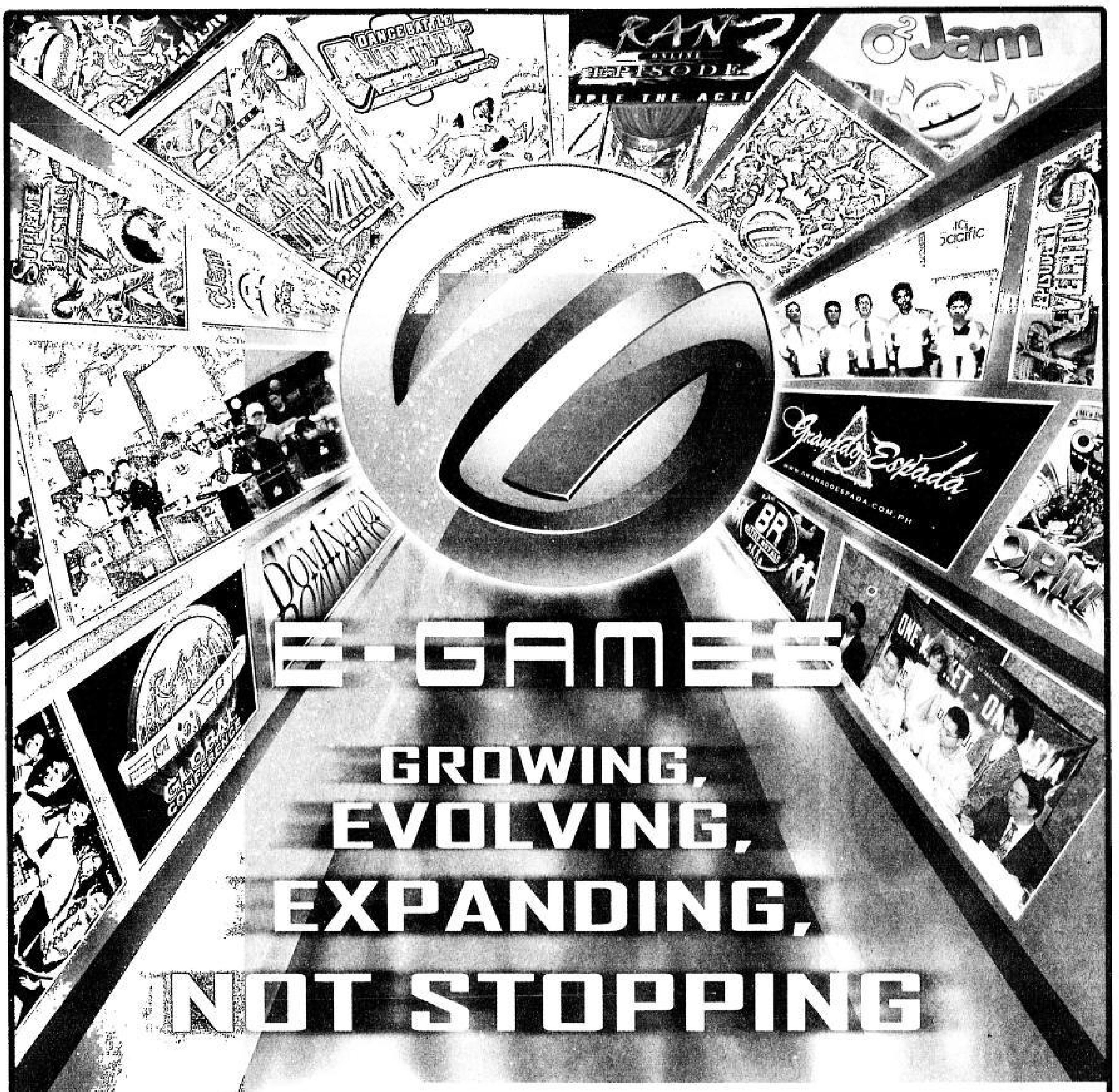
In early 2006, the industry was dominated by pay-to-play publishers that were hesitant to introduce the free-to-play model due to self-cannibalization. This imposed hourly payment fees on the Filipino online gaming community. In an industry that played by these rules, e-Games strove to change the rules of the game. This was achieved with the introduction of the free-to-play business model.

The pioneering strategy stems from the fact that the company's founders are "hardcore gamers" themselves. In 2007, and into 2008, other local online game publishers have shifted to the same business model out of necessity and in order to survive. This achieves e-games objective of shifting the industry from a predominantly pay-to-play industry to a free-to-play one.

e-Games free-to-play has grown to become the largest online gaming community in the country, with over 5 million registered users, about 50,000 concurrent users, and triple digit growth rates.

Win Factors

Aside from the free-to-play scheme, e-Games is also set apart by introducing new genres of games RAN Online is the first campus-based, modern-day MMORPG (massively multiplayer online role-playing game) For purists, Supreme Destiny is the traditional hack and slash sword-and-sorcery game.



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- Voted as Best Gaming Company in 2007
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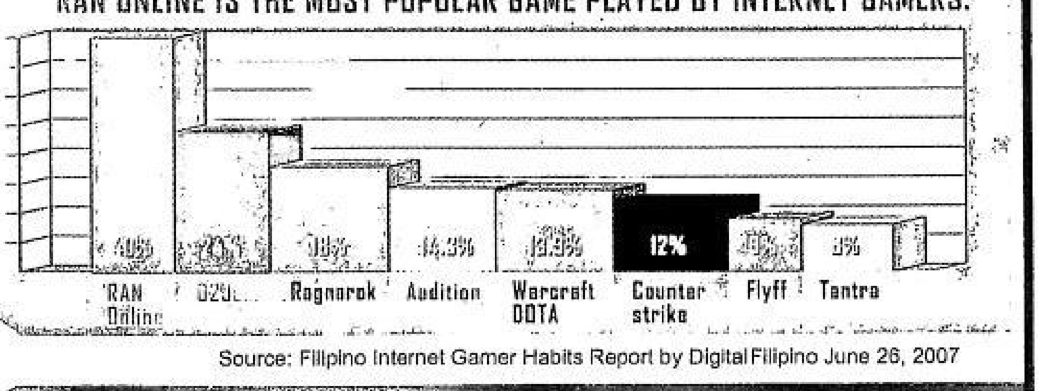
- RAN ONLINE is officially recognized as #1 MMORPG in the country
- O2JAM is recognized as #1 casual game in the Philippines
- E-games online games ranked 1st, 2nd and 4th most popular games played by Internet gamers

RAN ONLINE IS THE MOST POPULAR GAME PLAYED BY INTERNET GAMERS.



Source: Filipino Internet Gamer Habits Report by DigitalFilipino June 26, 2007

On the casual side of gaming, e-Games also introduced the first music-based and dancing-based games, namely O2 Jam and Audition which are ranked #2 and #3 in the country as of September 2007.

The company has also made moves to tap into new gaming demographics such as young professionals, Generation X gamers, and home-based players. For this end, e-Games is ushering in the next trend in the industry, which is the introduction of international Triple A titles to the local market through its partnership with Infocomm Asia Holdings or IAH Games.

First to be launched was Presidential Awardee for Best Game at the 2006 Korea Game Awards, Granado Espada (GE). Developed by the MMORPG guru Hakkyu Kim, GE utilizes the latest 3D technology and sound effects that rival the best in the industry today in terms of quality, such as the revolutionary Multi-Character Control (MCC) system, a first in MMORPG. The MMC enables gamers to control three different characters at the same time, ensuring a more engaging and enjoyable gaming experience.

And e-Games is not yet done. Soon to reach the Philippine shores is another Triple A title that gamers are excited about and have been looking forward to; another surefire game that will redefine the online gaming experience.

Market recognition

Critical relationships with other stakeholders have also been established and duly acknowledged. At the 2007 I-Café Congress, e-Games received "Best Gaming Company" plus over 10,000 Internet cafés nationwide bannering e-Games titles. This kind of recognition is important with Internet cafés being point-of-sale components in the online gaming sales cycle.

In a move following academic trends in Singapore, Korea and the United States, e-Games has forged a relationship with Asia Pacific College to award scholarships to the Philippine team which placed first runner-up in the regional RAN Global Tournament earlier this year.

Breaking New Ground

Not content to be a local publisher, e-Games has also leveraged on its Philippine experience to bring its brand of online gaming to other markets in the region, with Vietnam being first on the list. Vietnam is a logical choice since it has a gaming profile similar to the Philippines.

All of this is in line with IPVG CEO Enrique Gonzalez' vision of taking the company regional, "As a clear pioneer and market leader in the online gaming space in the Philippines, we will replicate this formula and success in other similar markets in Asia. We've immediately identified Vietnam as another dynamic growth market for out titles. We have a partnership with Cyberworld, which is a licensed local game operator in Vietnam. The Vietnam market is highly regulated and we were fortunate enough to have forged this alliance with Cyberworld."

"We will be launching runaway success RAN Online, O2Jam, Extreme Soccer in Vietnam and we expect them to be a success in 2008."

Regional expansion being the next step for this veteran gaming company; e-Games faces the future with clear vision and passion for gaming in its ongoing quest to provide more and better choices for gamers in the Philippines and soon, across the region.

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So, 3 other Pinoy bets chase leader

By Roy Luarca

GRANDMASTER-CANDIDATE WESLEY SO AND MARK PARAGUA continued to keep Philippine hopes burning, turning back foreign rivals in the 2007 President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo Cup International chess championship at the Duty Free Fiesta Mall in Parañaque City.

WESLEY So

This, even as China's Li Chao made it five-in-a-row yesterday with another brilliant show of woodpushing.

So, in pursuit of a GM title that he hopes he can chase down by the end of the year, subdued Yue Lie of China, while Paragua defeated another Chinese, Women's Grandmaster Wang Yu, as both Filipinos stayed in the hunt for the $6,000 top prize in the tournament that offers a total pot of $40,000.

So and Paragua hiked their total to four points, behind Li's unblemished 5.0. Li's latest conquest was Singaporean GM Zhang Zhong.

IM Ronald Dableo, on a comeback trail after a controversial suspension, and giant-killer Rolando Andador also hurdled their respective fifth-round assignments to join So and Paragua in the logjam at second to sixth places in this tournament that the National Chess Federation of the Philippines (NCFP) is holding in honor of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

Dableo held off Fernandito Pialan, and Andador shocked WIM Huang Qiang of China.

Also with four points was top seed GM Ni Hua of China, who outplayed IM Barlo Nadera.

Two other GM candidates managed to stay in contention by moving to 3.5 points for the tournament.

Jayson Gonzales bested Robert Suelo while Oliver Dimakiling beat Zhang Xiaowen of China. Joining them at 3.5 points was IM Julio Catakino Sadorra, who beat Victor Bruce Lluch.

Unheralded Dino Ballecer provided a surprise of sorts, forcing highly fancied Vietnamese GM Dao Thien Hai to a draw, to also improve to 3.5 points.

GM Eugene Torre lagged half a point behind, settling for a draw with compatriot Hamed Nouri.

Standings after five rounds:

5.0 points—C. Li (China); 4.0—W. So (RP), M. Paragua (RP), R. Dableo (RP), R. Andador (RP), H. Ni China); 3.5—J. Gonzales (RP), O. Dimakiling (RP), J. Sadorra (RP), D. Ballecer (RP), D.T.Hai (Vietnam), N. A. Dung (Vietnam) W. Zhou (China)

Toyota nails q'final bonus

By Jasmine W. Payo

THE RACE FOR THE LAST quarterfinal bonus tightened as Toyota Balintawak outlasted newcomer Pharex, 78-71, in the pool round of the PBL V-Go Extreme Energy Drink Cup at The Arena in San Juan Saturday night.

Cholo Villanueva scored 10 points in the final period to boost the Road Kings, who took a share of the Pool B lead with Mail and More at 4-4.

The top squad in Pool B will earn a twice-to-beat edge in the quarterfinals, while the lowest-ranked team will be eliminated.

The scores

TOYOTA BALINTAWAK 78—Aldave 16, Faundo 12, Villanueva 10, Dedicatoria 9, Sta. Maria 8, Jaime 6, Rodriguez 6, Casio 4, Guerrrero 3, Cole 2, Hayes 0, Balgos 0, Sena 0, Alcaraz 0.

PHAREX 71—Matias 12, Oreta 11, Allera 10, Alfad 10, Espiritu 8, Co 8, Bulawan 5, Aquino 4, De Guzman 3, Gerilla 0.

Quarters: 18-16, 37-41, 57-55, 78-71

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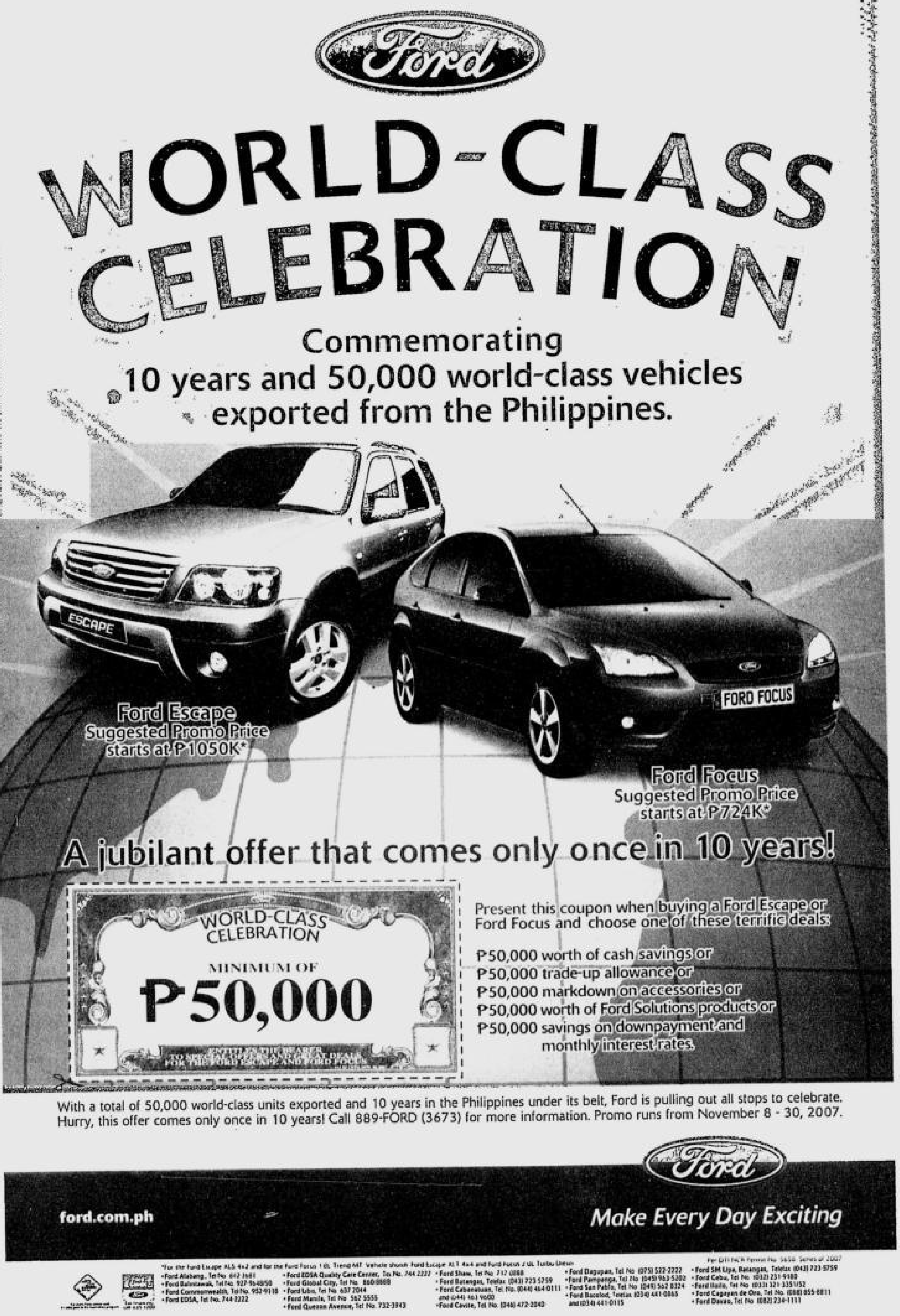

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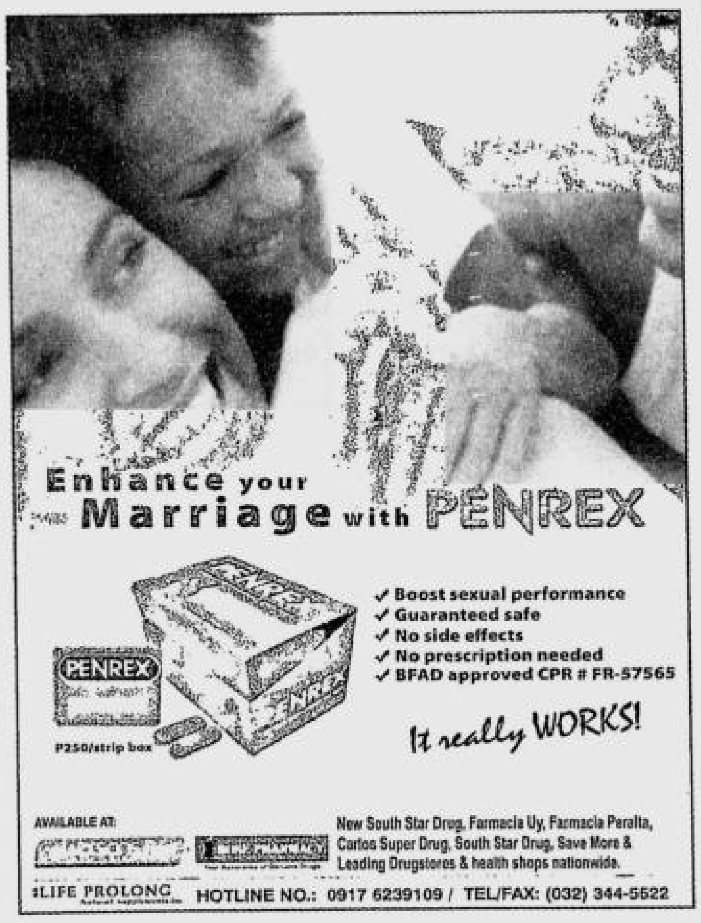

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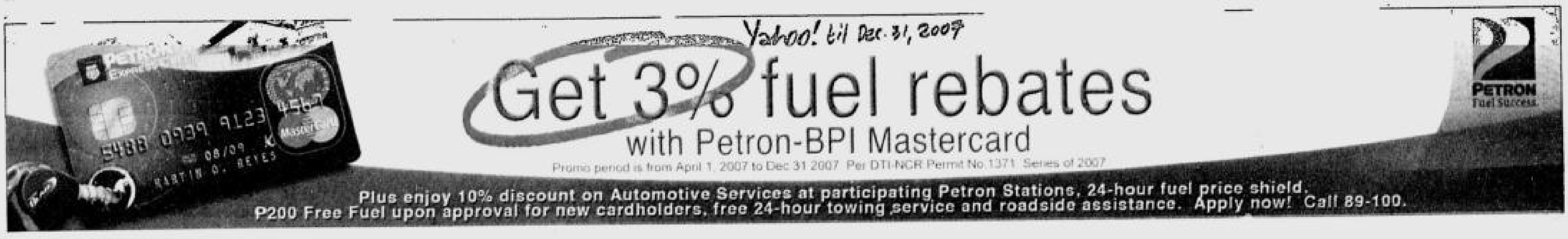

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Lady Eagles arrange playoff with Tigresses

By Romina S. Austria

ATENEO BOUNCED BACK FROM AN OPENING-SET LOSS TO score a repeat win over powerhouse University of Santo Tomas, 20-25, 25-21, 25-19, 25-22, and force a playoff for the second finals berth yesterday in the 2007 Shakey's V-League women's volleyball second conference at The Arena in San Juan.

The third win in four semifinal matches assured the Lady Eagles of a title shot under the 3-of-4 incentive. They finished the elimination round in third place at 5-2, dropped their first semifinal game to the San Sebastian Lady Stags, before sweeping their next three assignments.

The Tigresses, which wound up tied with the Lady Eagles at 8-3, absorbed their second straight loss after a seven-win run. Prior to that streak, the first conference champions also lost to the Lady Eagles in five sets, 22-25, 25-22, 23-25, 25-19, 15-6, last Oct. 21.

UST and Ateneo clash for the third time at 5 p.m. tomorrow for the right to face San Sebastian in the best-of-three championship series, which begins on Friday.

The fourth set saw eight lead changes before Charo Soriano, Carmina Acevedo and Thai import Lithawat Kesinee capitalized on UST's erratic baseline defense with crosscourt attacks to hand Ateneo the lead for good, 18-14.

UST was able to come within a point twice—18-19 and 19-20—with back-to-back power attacks by Venus Bernal but allowed Ateneo to pull away anew, 24-19.

Ateneo's zealousness to win the match resulted in miscues that trimmed its edge to 24-22. After a timeout, Lithawat finally ended the match with a smash.

"If we can continue playing this good, we have a big chance to beat UST again," said Ateneo coach Ronald Dulay.

The Tigresses started the match looking fully recovered from Friday's loss to the Lady Stags. They took the first set, 25-20, and were leading early in the next set. But from a 12-10 advantage, the Tigresses found themselves trailing 19-15, and never recovered.

The third set belonged to Ateneo when it opened up a 9-2 lead as UST's offense jammed and its defense was in total disarray.

Angeli Tabaquero and Bernal put UST on top for the first time in the third set, 18-17, but the rest of the team could not stop Soriano and Lithawat from scoring.

In the first game, San Sebastian completed a four-game sweep of the semifinal by dominating La Salle, 25-21, 25-20, 25-17, to finish with a league-best 10-1 card.

La Salle dropped all its semifinal assignments and bowed out at fifth spot with a 3-8 slate.

LA SALLE'S Maureen Penetrante of La Salle blocks a smash by Jinni Mondejar of San Sebastian in yesterday's match. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Strong Beijing chance for jins

Filipinos eye three more slots

By Marc Anthony Reyes

HO CHI MINH CITY—THE PHILIPPINE taekwondo team gunning for three more Beijing Olympic berths hit the ground running on Sunday in this crowded city which is hosting the last qualifying tournament later this week.

Arriving ahead of everybody else except for Saudi Arabia, the RP jins immediately plunged into road work around the Nga Phu Dong Plaza in the morning then trained in the afternoon at the Phu Tho Competition House 15 minutes away.

The team will parade a new member, Kristine Elaine Alora who replaced her elder sister Kathleen Eunice in the Asian qualifying. Alora, who turned 18 Sunday, will compete in the 57kg class which is the Olympic second weight category for women.

"We have a bigger chance with her in the second weight category," said Philippine Taekwondo Association executive vice president Sung Chon Hong.

Alora, a natural welterweight, shed 10 kilos to make the weight which makes her formidable in the category with her muscle-bound 5-foot-7 frame.

"I feel proud that I made the team. I will try not to let the country down," said Alora.

The export management freshman from the College of St. Benilde has a Southeast Asian Games (2005) gold medal under her belt on top of winning the 2004 Asian Taekwondo Federation Championships.

Olympic veteran Mary Antoinette Rivero (67kg) and Alexander Briones (80kg) complete the team mixing up against 90 others from 30 countries. They narrowly missed the boat to China during last September's World qualifying in Manchester, England.

But this time, coaches Kitoy Cruz and Rocky Samson are upbeat about the team's chances, noting that Korea won't be sending any crew and heavyweights Chinese Taipei and Thailand have already qualified bets in during the Worlds.

"The same way, other Asian countries feel good about their chances when Tshomlee (Go) already qualified," said Samson of the 58 kg fighter who snagged the first Olympic slot for RP in Manchester.

Top bets from host Vietnam, Iran and other former Russian republics are expected to provide tough opposition for the Filipinos.

RP a phone call from Olympic gold?

BARE EYE

Recab Trinidad

IT REQUIRES EXTRAORDINARY TALENT, but it pays to stay very close to the President of the Philippines whenever there's a courtesy call in Malacañang.

You either land on the front page the morning after or, if not, get all the chance in the world to make *bulong*, speak out your dreams.

Sorry, but that's not always the case.

There could also be, between a plastic smile and an infamous smirk, a reversal of roles.

Like what happened on Friday when members of the RP delegation to the Southeast Asian Games in Thailand paid an official visit to Mrs. Arroyo.

The photo sessions went out very fine, everybody got the rare chance to pose with Her Excellency.

Only this time out, it was Mrs. Arroyo who spoke out her wish.

And she didn't whisper, she spoke out loud and clear, for everybody to hear.

* * *

"So we're going to win the gold in Beijing, right?" asked Mrs. Arroyo as sports officials and athletes milled excitedly around her.

So who's the sports official in his right mind would answer no to the question, which was more of a fervent, frantic call than anything else?

Based on subsequent newspaper reports, the two top sports officials of the country, Philippine Sports Commission chairman William Ramirez and Philippine Olympic Committee president Jose Cojuangco Jr., were standing close to the President.

Of course, Cojuangco heard what Ms Arroyo had to say, very clearly.

But it was Ramirez who gallantly took the cudgels for everybody present in the affair.

"Yes, Ma'am," replied Ramirez.

* * *

Poor Butch Ramirez, the PSC chief had allowed himself to be caught in a spot.

You see, Congressman Monico Puentevella, RP chief of mission to the Thailand Games, was also there.

But he kept mum when the point about retaining the SEA Games overall championship was raised.

Puentevella has been openly explaining that it was next to impossible to retain the overall title won by the Philippines when the country hosted the biennial meet two years ago.

He knows the facts of the case well enough.

* * *

Back to Butch Ramirez, the tested PSC big boss.

We all know that boxing is the perennial top hope to finally capture the elusive Olympic gold medal for the country.

In fact, boxers Anthony Villanueva in Tokyo 1964 and Mansueto Velasco in Atlanta in 1996, by winning Olympic silver medals, had come a few honest points of bagging that elusive gold medal.

"Let's try to get at least one (gold) because we've not gotten it anyway," Ms Arroyo barked, smiling.

Reports had it that Ms Arroyo was also overheard stating that taekwondo could be counted on to finally do the golden trick for the Philippines in Beijing next year.

OK, this could bring some relief to Ramirez, now that the President must've been apprised of the deterioration of the Philippine amateur boxing team, based on its dismal showing in the World Championship in Chicago earlier this month.

Although RP managed to send in one fighter, light flyweight Harry Tañamor, into the Beijing Olympic boxing tournament, this feat was buried under the amazing feat of Thailand, which gleefully paraded in a total of five Olympic qualifiers in Chicago.

* * *

Ramirez, by the way, attended the Chicago world event where RP boxers reportedly suffered from the dreadful irresponsibility displayed by team officials.

Ramirez would not mince word on how weak, lost and deteriorated the Filipino amateur boxers had appeared in the major Chicago event.

So far, there has been no explanation from top RP team officials, including Amateur Boxing Association of the Philippines president Manny Lopez, on the debacle.

He said yes to her excited President but, as things stand, the best Ramirez could hope is for the winds in Beijing next year to bend to the frantic wishes of the Chief Executive.

Sorry, the Olympics is not conducted the way they manipulate presidential elections in the Philippines.

Hello, Garci. Phone calls are strictly prohibited during the tallying of gold-medal points.

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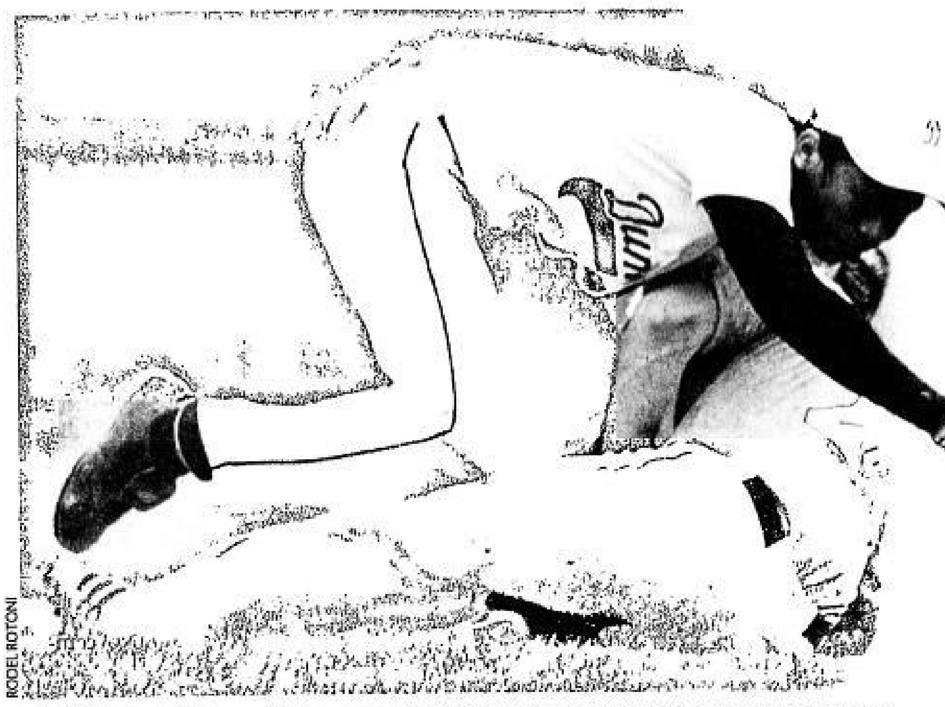


RODEL ROTONI

CEBU'S John de Ubago of Cebu rams into Dumaguete second baseman Christian de Leon.

Manila, Cebu batters clinch s'final berths

THE MANILA SHARKS BLASTED MARIKINA AND THE CEBU DOLPHINS hammered Dumaguete yesterday to barge into the semifinals of Baseball Philippines' Series 2 at the Rizal ballpark.

Manila's 11-5 whipping of Marikina, its sixth in eight matches, and Cebu's 8-2 demolition of Dumaguete allowed the victors to top their respective brackets.

The Sharks pounded the Shoemakers with 11 hits as they ruled the Northern division of the tournament organized by Community Sports Inc.

The Dolphins tagged the Unibikers' pitchers with nine hits to post their sixth win in nine outings, tops in the Southern division.

Cebu team manager Isaac Bacarisas attributed the Dolphins' win to their solid play.

"The boys were very determined and they played very well," said Bacarisas in Filipino.

The results rendered the games on Dec. 2 pitting Makati against Marikina and that of Dumaguete versus Forward Taguig no bearing.

All four squads have already made it to the playoff matches for the last two semifinal berths.

The winner of the Makati-Marikina duel will take on Manila while the victor in the Dumaguete-Taguig clash faces Cebu in the conference finals.

Centerfielder Saxson Omandac led the Dolphins on 3-of-4 batting while driving a pair of runs. Second baseman Emerson Atilano went 3-of-5 and scored a run. *Steve Silva, Contributor*

Linescores:
First Game RHE
MARIKINA 120 000 011—5 9 0
MANILA 121 132 01x—11 10 3
Second Game
DUMAGUETE 000 100 010—2 2 1
CEBU 120 212 00x—8 9 3

Champions League Final Four up today

By Jasmine W. Payo

THREE FORMIDABLE SQUADS AND A SURprise semifinalist dispute the championship berths in the FilOil/Flying V Collegiate Champions League today at The Arena in San Juan.

Southern powerhouse University of Visayas takes on unpredictable STI College at 2 p.m. to open the winner-take-all Final Four round with Ateneo clashing with UAAP nemesis University of Santo Tomas at 4 p.m..

"We'll just be ready," said coach Pido Jarencio, whose Tigers stunned the Blue Eagles in the 2006 UAAP championship series.

The Tigers showed their might by bringing down back-to-back NCAA champion San Beda, 88-84, last Monday in the tournament among the country's best collegiate teams.

GAMES TODAY
(*The Arena, San Juan*)
2 p.m.—University of Visayas vs STI
4 p.m.—Santo Tomas vs Ateneo

The Blue Eagles banked on Chris Tiu, who fired 10 of his 16 markers in the final period for an 81-71 victory over the Jose Rizal Bombers.

But it's the STI Olympians who turned heads after shocking the favored Far Eastern Tamaraws, 77-72, last Wednesday.

Mark Balneg nailed the clutch baskets for the Olympians, the reigning-champions of the National Athletic Association of Schools, Colleges and Universities (Naascu).

University of Visayas—bannered by Ritchum Dennison, Rino Berame and 6-foot-11 Fil-Am Greg Slaughter—is the last provincial team standing in the knockout tournament.

SPORTS WATCH

Last two days of 'Bakbakan'

TWO MORE CHAMPIONSHIP sessions starting today at the Makati Coliseum will be staged in the NFGB Bakbakan National 10-Stag Derby. The popular stag competition, which drew 1,643 entries, ends tomorrow at the Araneta Coliseum. Last Saturday, Willie Nicolas of Cagayan Valley GBA became the first participant to score 9 points. Red Wings of Giovanni Lim, Ampil Brothers and Mayor Rodol Carreon came next with 8.5.

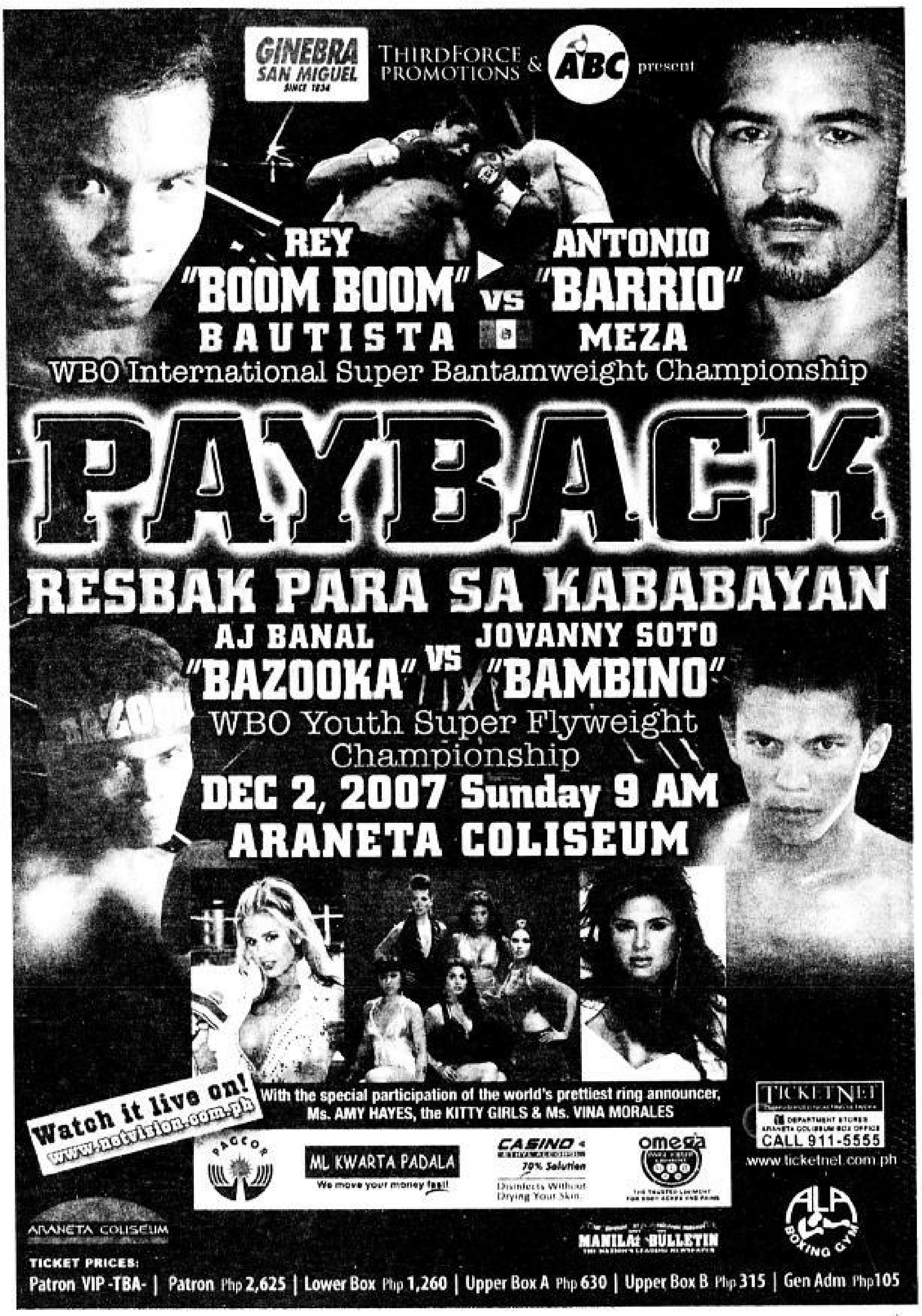
UGBA 9-stag derby fires off

MATCHES RESUME IN the UGBA Heritage Cup National 9-Stag Derby today at the San Juan Coliseum with Sagupaan Complexor 3000 as sponsor. Eight more cockers tallied three wins each in Saturday's qualifying round—Rep. Arthur Celeste, Nestor Vendivil, Levi Panganiban, Ontong Fortuno, Alex Tang, Jun Sevilla, Wilvin Sy at Joe Alimbuyuguen-Butch Yabut.

RACING

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Blitzkrieg (6), King View (4), Hepburn (3), Head Turner (1)
Race 2—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)— Tiger Rally (3), Devil Rising (4), Getting Personal (6), Bachelor Of Arts (1), From This Moment (9)
Race 3—(Qrt/Tri)—Collective Dreams (5), King of Fortune (4), Drink N Drink (1), Shy Girl/Ad Infinitum (3)
Race 4—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)— Flaming Heart (6), Now Showing (1), Windsong (2), Jay Nicole (5), Cool Reception (4)
Race 5—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)— Hard To Find (2), King Anthony/Karma (9), So Gorgeous (3), Manila Style (7), Lucky Joe (6)
Race 6—(Qrt/Tri)—Leica N' Raven (4), D As In Dixie (3), Iron Mic (5), Honest To Goodness (1)
Race 7—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Truly Inspired (5), Grey Magic (4), Rogue Knight (3), Angels Star (6), Prince Chot Chot/Prince Dugo (9), Mike's Zam Lady (7)
Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)— Mulligan (3), Dancing Slow (1), Stream Time (4), Mancor's Charm (2), Real Triumph (12), Dream Rose (11)



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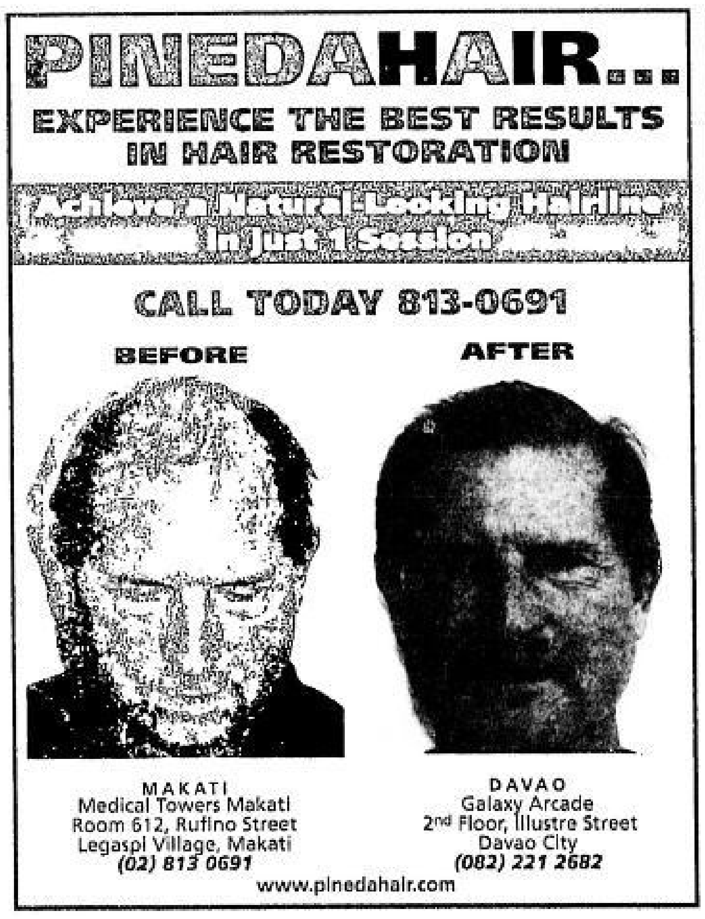

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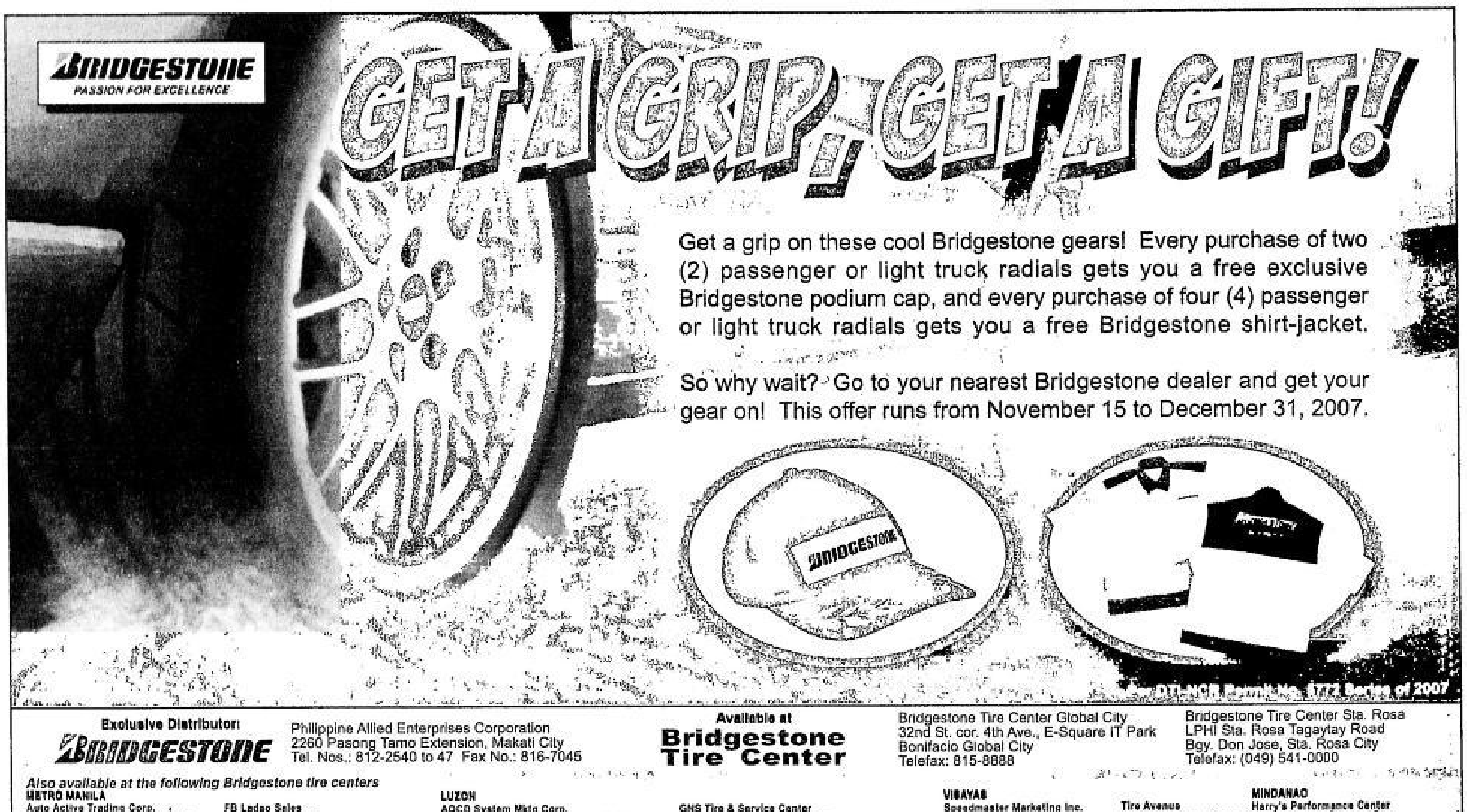

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They're not just good, they're very lucky too

Allen beats buzzer in latest Celtics victory

NEW YORK—RAY ALLEN HIT A three-pointer at the buzzer to give the sizzling Celtics a 96-95 victory over the Bobcats in Charlotte on Saturday, Boston's 11th win in the first 12 games of the season.

Allen's winning basket came after teammate Eddie House had knocked away a Jason Richardson inbounds pass with 4.7 seconds left, capping an evening on which the Celtics won their third straight game despite not playing well.

"There are so many lessons for us in that game," Boston coach Doc Rivers told reporters. "We didn't play well. It was good to be lucky because we were not good tonight, we were lucky but we'll take it."

Allen had made just three of his previous 14 shots in the game.

"Even though I had an off night, I never lost my confidence," he said.

Paul Pierce and Kevin Garnett, the other two members of Boston's new "Big Three," scored 23 points each and Garnett collected 11 rebounds.

"It was a great game," said Rivers. "I feel bad for (the Bobcats) because they played so hard."

"It was definitely a difficult loss," said Charlotte coach Sam Vincent. "I mean, to play that well against a team that good and feel like you have the game won and not win really makes it a tough loss."

It was an amazing final five seconds. Pierce missed a jumper from the foul line and Raymond Felton got the rebound. Allen quickly fouled Felton, but the Celtics were not over the limit, so the Bobcats had to put the ball in play.

Richardson tried to inbound the ball to Jeff McInnis, but House got his hand on it, deflecting it into the air to Pierce. In the past, Pierce might have wheeled and tried to shoot with the clock winding down and the game on the line. This time, he saw Allen, all alone, near the top of the key.

"My thought process is, he's wide open," said Pierce. "He's Ray Allen. He's one of the best 3-point shooters in NBA history. There you go."

In New York, Eddy Curry scored 21 points against his former team, and the New York Knicks snapped their eight-game losing streak with an 85-78 victory over Chicago on Saturday.

Both teams are off to dismal starts. Chicago has overcome its poor early season play in recent years, but New York couldn't afford to let things get much worse, especially with plenty of speculation already that coach Isiah Thomas could be fired.

The Bulls dropped their third straight and fell to 2-9.

In Cleveland, LeBron James scored 37 points as part of his third triple-double of the season to lead the Cavaliers to a 111-108 victory over Toronto.

James, who scored six points in the final minute to seal the win, had 12 rebounds and 12 assists for the 13th triple-double of his career.

In Orlando, Florida, Hedo Turkoglu scored 27 points and the Magic handed Magic coach Stan Van Gundy's former team, the Mimai Heat, their Eastern Conference-leading 10th loss, 120-99.

In Philadelphia, Golden State's Kelenna Azubuike made a three-pointer from the left corner with 6.1 seconds left in overtime to down the 76ers, 100-98, in overtime as the Warriors finished a five-game road trip with a winning record for the first time since 1980.

In Memphis, Tennessee, Juan Carlos Navarro scored 28 points as the Grizzlies downed the Washington Wizards, 124-118.

In Minneapolis, Josh Smith scored 10 of his 16 points in the fourth quarter to help the Atlanta Hawks erase a 21-point deficit and beat the Minnesota Timberwolves, 94-87.

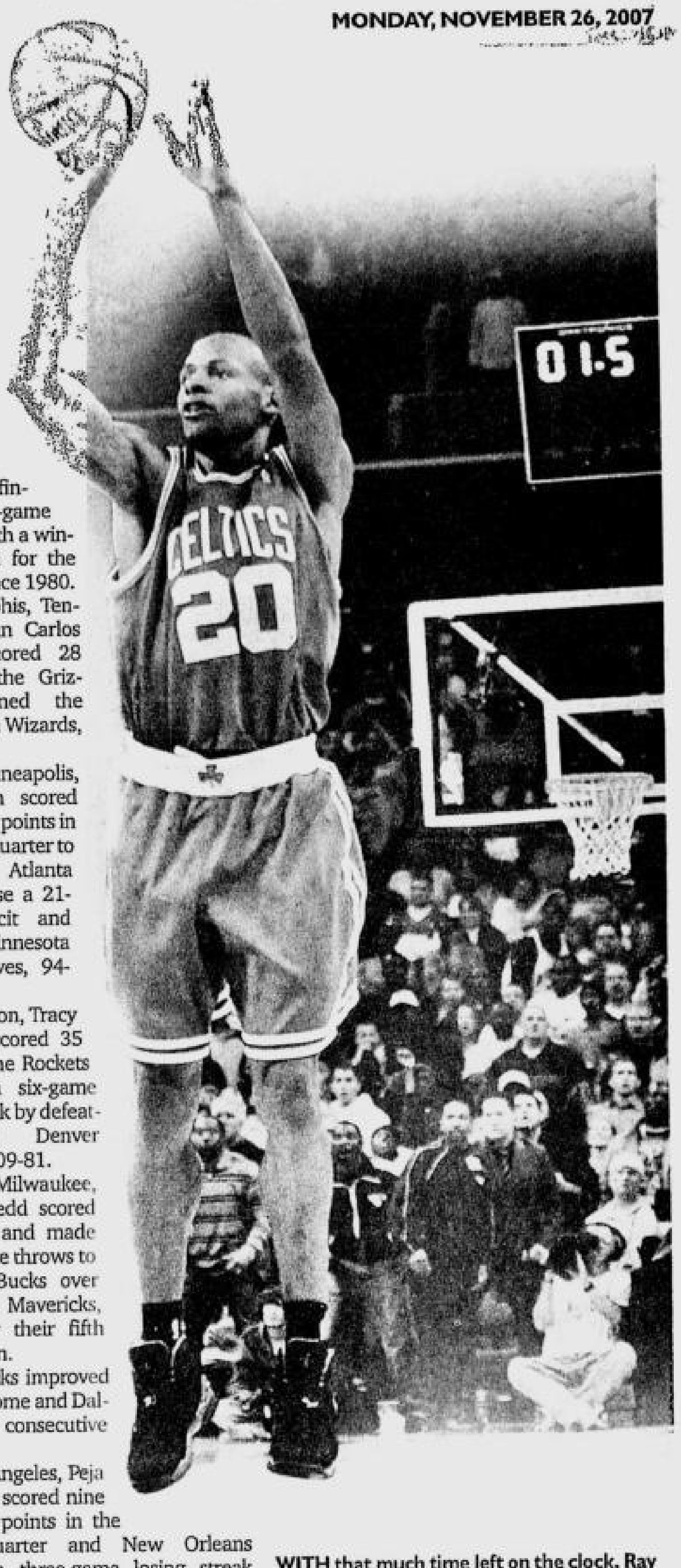
In Houston, Tracy McGrady scored 35 points as the Rockets snapped a six-game losing streak by defeating the Denver Nuggets, 109-81.

In Milwaukee, Michael Redd scored 27 points and made five late free throws to lead the Bucks over the Dallas Mavericks, 97-95, for their fifth straight win.

The Bucks improved to 6-0 at home and Dallas lost consecutive games.

In Los Angeles, Peja Stojakovic scored nine of his 22 points in the fourth quarter and New Orleans snapped a three-game losing streak with a 98-89 victory over the Los Angeles Clippers. *Reuters, AP, New York Times News Service*

DALLAS star Dirk Nowitzki loses his balance—and possession of the leather—as he rams into a Milwaukee Bucks double team made up of Mo Williams (left) and Andrew Bogu. AP



WITH that much time left on the clock, Ray Allen pops a triple that saves the Boston Celtics, who improved to an NBA-best 11-1 record this season. AFP

Introducing Kobe's new goal: Defensive Player of the Year

BOSTON—WITH THE EXCEPTION of the 2004-05 season, Kobe Bryant has been a member of the NBA's All-Defensive teams going back to the 1999-2000 season.

He's been a first-teamer five times, including the last two.

"I've always wanted to play defense," he said. "I've always prided myself on that."

Now, he's hoping to take the next step at the defensive end.

"This year, I made it a top priority of mine to win Defensive Player of the Year more than anything," he said, "because I understand that being able to lead my team by example, by playing that kind of defense, that that will inspire my teammates to do the same."

Bryant was the undisputed stopper on the US National Team last summer (Leandro Barbosa still hasn't figured out what happened to him in the US-Brazil game) but, in that case, he didn't have to worry about scoring. LeBron James, Carmelo Anthony, and the fellas took care of that.

With the Lakers, that clearly is not the case. Bryant said the ultra-intensive effort on defense does take away something from the other end.

"But you try and be smart about it," he said. "You watch the way we play this year. You rarely see me in isolations. There's more coming off screens and catching and shooting. There's more ball movement.

"I try to put a lot of responsibility on my teammates to make more decisions, make more plays at the offensive end, so I don't have to do that."

Winning the Defensive Player of the Year award is tough for a non-big man; the last was Gary Payton in 1996. But five of the first six winners were guards or swingmen, including Michael Jordan in 1988.

Asked about Kobe's defense this year, Los Angeles coach Phil Jackson said, "He's working real hard at it. Kobe is giving a real good effort this year, and last year, at times, I thought he was putting more effort into the offense than in the defense." *New York Times News Service*

Iggy sparks Golden Oats past J. Hay

BAGUIO CITY—NOT EVEN THE RAINS brought by Typhoon Mina could stop defending champion Golden Oats from grabbing the early lead at the start of the Fil championship division of the Fil-Am Seniors Golf Invitational here.

Iggy Clavecilla, the reigning seniors amateur champion, shot a one-over-par 62 at the short but tricky Baguio Country Club course for 35 points under the Modified PAL Stableford of scoring to power Golden Oats to the lead with 113.

Clavecilla got ample help from Bing Bunye and Eduardo Sison, who each carded 27, and Freddie Mendoza, who contributed 24. Florene delos Santos' 22 did not count.

Golden Oats took a seven-point lead over local favorite Camp John Hay Golf Club Team 1 which assembled 106 behind Fred Puckett's 32.

Retired generals Nelson Eslao and Clyde Cabreros chipped in identical 25s, and foreigner Bjorn Andersson added 24 in the five-to-play, four-to-count tournament.

Lawyer Mel Malabanan, meanwhile, aced the par-three, 187-yard hole No. 16 of Baguio Country Club and lined himself up to win a brand-new Mazda 3 sedan.

"It's not yet in the bag," said the 13-year golfer, who used a PRGR 6 iron and a Callaway #2 to score his second career hole-in-one.

Malabanan gets the car if no other golfer scores an ace for the rest of the tournament.

In Fil A action, Camp Aguinaldo took the lead with 100 points as Rey Ochosa scored 27, Dante Tejada 26, Art Alabanza 25 and Eduardo Gador 22.

SAMPRAS

'Roger will break major records'

MACAU—PETE SAMPRAS' WIN OVER Roger Federer in Macau this weekend does nothing to end arguments about who is the greater player—but the American is convinced the world No. 1 will smash his records.

Following two defeats last week in their three-match Asian exhibition series, the retired Sampras came back strongly at Macau's Venetian resort-hotel Saturday, defeating the Swiss maestro in straight sets, 7-6, 6-4.

Sampras, who admitted in a press briefing after the match that he came to Asia hoping to be competitive and to take a set off Federer, is predicting that the 12-time Grand Slam champion will beat his mark of 14 and eclipse his rankings records.

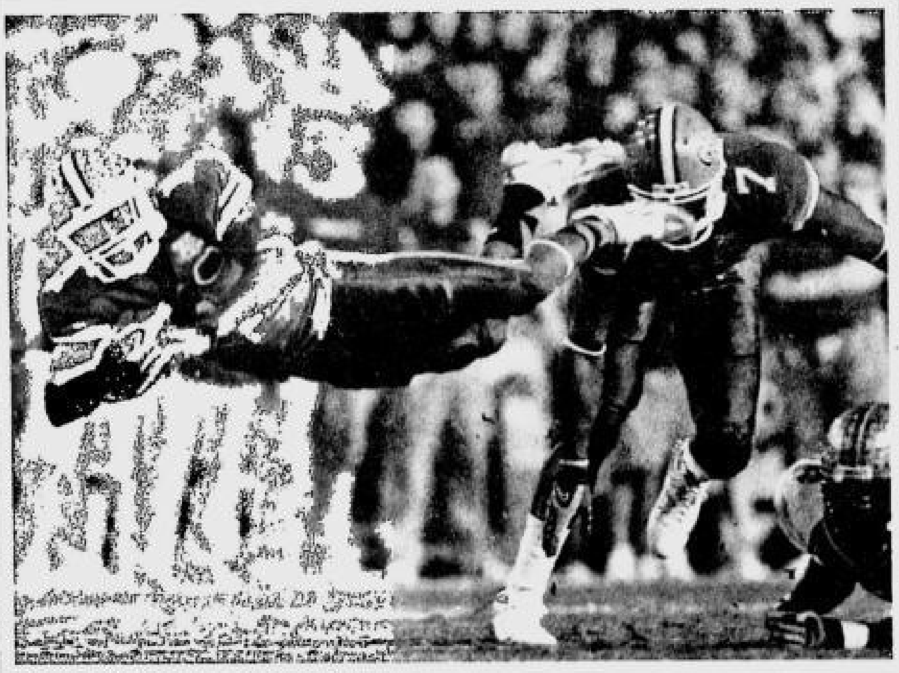
Sampras, 36, held the top ranking for a record 286 weeks in total and finished as world No. 1 for a record six consecutive years.

"The major record, he's got so much time," Sampras said. "He's 26 and he's got the next four years to be in the pinnacle of his career so I see him breaking that, if not next year, pretty soon."

With Federer finishing four years in a row as No. 1, Sampras believes it is only a matter of time before the Swiss betters him in that respect as well.

"I don't say that lightly. He knows it's a lot of work but I know the game well enough to know he's a class above everyone.

"That being said, these kids are hungry, (Rafael) Nadal and (Novak) Djokovic and (Andy) Roddick. These guys are going to want to push him but I still feel like Roger has an extra gear." *AFP*



FLYING CATCH
Wide receiver Percy Harvin (left) of the Florida Gators makes a catch against the Florida State Seminoles at Ben Hill Griffin. The Gators beat the Seminoles, 45-12. AFP

Pacquiao's cagers score back-to-back

TAGAYTAY CITY—MONTAÑA Pawnshop-Davao shocked host Tagaytay-Spring Cooking Oil, 68-61, while MP Gensan Pacman posted its second straight victory Saturday in the 2007 Tagaytay-NBC International Invitational Cup basketball tournament at the Tolentino Sports and Activity Center here.

Dado Ayson, Henry Fernandez and Rocky Clavel combined to give Armando Quibod's Jewellers their biggest lead at 50-34 with 1:39 left in the third period.

The Davao cagers held off the Cooking Oil Masters in the payoff period to level their record at 1-1 in the tournament.

The Cooking Oil Masters of NBC president Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla and Tagaytay City mayor Bambol Tolentino also fell to 1-1.

Manny Pacquiao's Warriors toppled Mayor Sammy Co's Pagadian Explorers, 75-69, in the other game.

The scores:

GENSAN 75—Menor 13, Dennison 12, Recustodio 9, Medalla 7, Locsin 6, Tadena 6, Daja 6, Farochilen 4, Lumantas 4, Deligero 2, Santos 2, Rubio 0

PAGADIAN 69—Benitez (19), Latoreno 13, Sierra 11, Orquillas 7, Espiritu 5, Saludsod 4, Villaver 3, Ayuk 2, Quilo 2, Naron 0, Sinco 0.

Quarters: 11-15, 37-32, 57-55, 75-69

Second Game

DAVAO 68—Ayson 14, Fernandez 14, Clacel 11, Lamocha 9, Poloyapoy 8, Quibod 4, Abanes 2, Canlas 2, Dawal 2, Braga 2.

TAGAYTAY 61—Epondulan 10, Guiyab 10, Capobres 9, Marquez 8, Villamin 8, Tajonera 6, Reyes 5, Liquido 3, Yambao 3, De Castro 2.

Quarters: 17-14, 35-25, 50-42, 68-61

Franz forms 55-man RP Youth pool

By Jasmine W. Payo

NATIONAL COACH FRANZ PUMAREN HAS formed a 55-man pool for the Philippine Youth Team even as the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas unveiled a three-year, multimillion program backed by mobile phone giant Nokia.

Pumaren said the candidates, 18 years and younger face a long, rugged and hectic schedule that includes overseas training and stints in international youth tournaments.

"This is important for us because this batch will probably carry the men's team in the near future," said Pumaren.

Practice will start tomorrow at 6 to 8 p.m. at the Blue Eagle Gym in Loyola Heights.

Members of UAAP juniors champion La Salle Zobel and three-time NCAA juniors titlist San Sebastian banner the list of aspirants set to train in the United States, South Korea and China before vying in the Seaba juniors championship in May next year in Malaysia.

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By Inquirer Sports

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EURO

Franz forms 55-man RP Youth pool

By Jasmine W. Payo

NATIONAL COACH FRANZ PUMAREN HAS formed a 55-man pool for the Philippine Youth Team even as the Samahang Basketbol ng Pilipinas unveiled a three-year, multimillion program backed by mobile phone giant Nokia.

Pumaren said the candidates, 18 years and younger face a long, rugged and hectic schedule that includes overseas training and stints in international youth tournaments.

"This is important for us because this batch will probably carry the men's team in the near future," said Pumaren.

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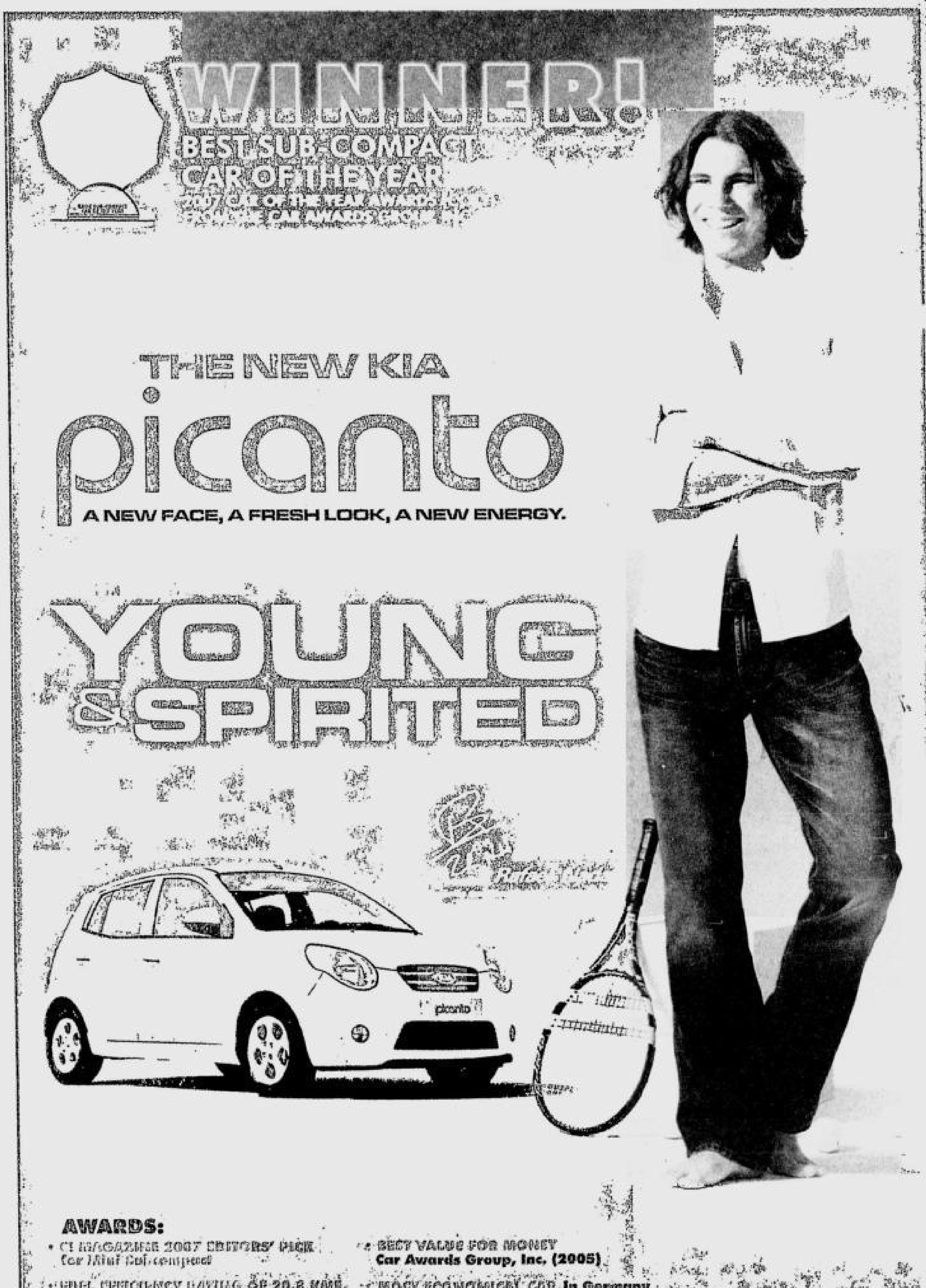

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SPORTS

Drama Belle gets all the marbles

By Musong R. Castillo

CARMONA, CAVITE—THERE WAS A LOT OF DRAMA ALL RIGHT—from a mare named after it.

Drama Belle, a four-year-old import from Australia ridden by a substitute, won the Ambassador Danding Cojuangco Stakes as a far third choice at the San Lazaro Leisure Park last night.

Making her move rounding the final bend under Armando Lumagui, the veteran jockey who took over from Dominador Borbe at the last minute, Drama Belle beat longshot Ziras and RK Hipolito by a length and bagged the whopping P2.4 million top prize.

Sent off as the far third favorite together with coupled entry Glory and Honour and Antonio Alcasid, Drama Belle put together strides that the rest of the field couldn't match in the final two quarters to secure the biggest win of her career.

She clocked two minutes and seven seconds for the back-breaking 2,000 meters with quarter times of 25, 24', 26, 24' and 27.

Outstanding pick Wild Orchid set the pace under Jeffryl Zarate, while coupler Real Spicy, with Louie D. Balboa, struggled in the tightly bunched group behind her.

Wild Orchid, the 2005 Horse of the Year, settled for fourth behind Glory and Honour, while Real Spicy, last year's super horse, failed to weave past heavy traffic early and paid for it as he finished out of the money.

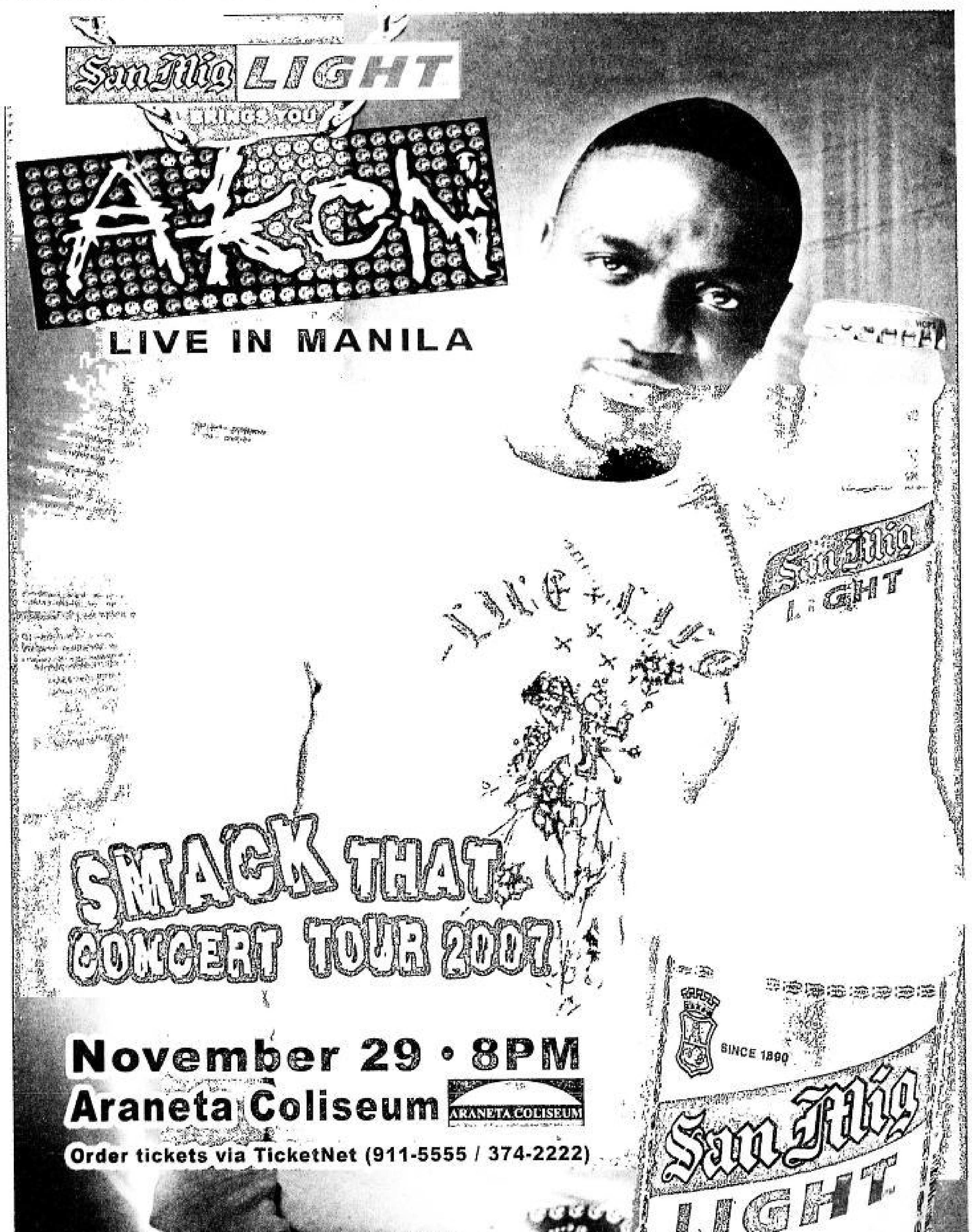
"My plan was just to land third at best," Lumagui said in Filipino. "But when I felt that my mount had a lot to give, I knew we had a chance at victory."

Second choice Ever Mine Now, under Jonathan Hernandez, limped out before the pack hit the backstretch.

When the pack made its move in the far turn, Drama Belle produced a huge burst of speed to put her in the hunt.

Earlier, Indelible Ink stretched her amazing win run to eight after ruling the Two-Year-Old Invitational Stakes by nine lengths over Unopposed.

Zarate booted home the daughter of Best Of Luck out of Seaquin in 1:26 for 1,400 meters. The win was worth P600,000.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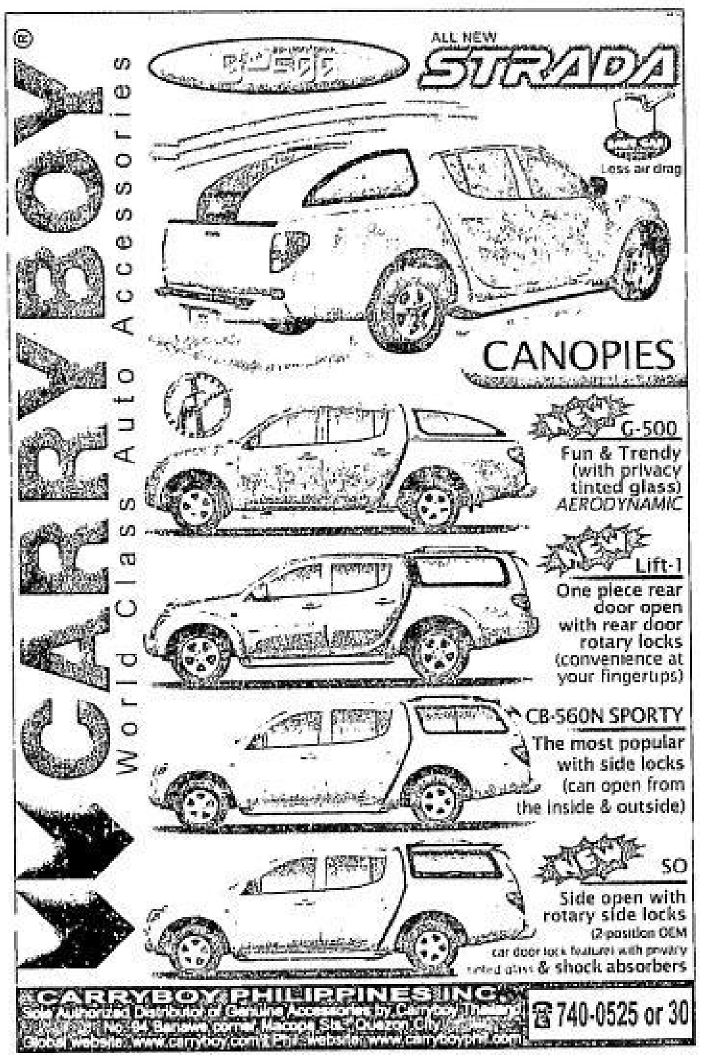
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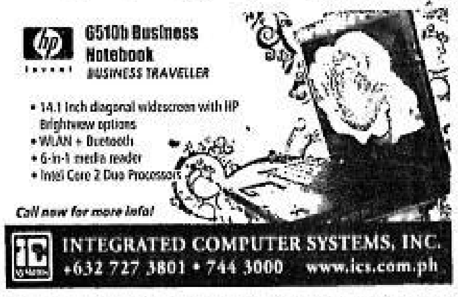

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'07 inflation seen to range between 2.6-2.7%

Rise in consumer prices tempered by agri yield

By Doris C. Dumlao

EVEN AS OIL PRICES IN WORLD MARKETS REACH unprecedented heights, the country is still expected to keep the year-on-year rise in inflation to within a benign range of 2.6 to 2.9 percent in the fourth quarter.

Based on the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' average forecast for the last three months, inflation for the whole year is expected to fall between 2.6 to 2.7 percent.

The BSP earlier projected that annual inflation would hover between 2.6 to 3.1 percent this year, much lower than the 4 to 5 percent ceiling set by the government's economic managers.

The country's inflation rate, or the average increase in consumer prices based on a basket of goods consumed by a typical household, has averaged at 2.6 percent in the first 10 months. In October, annual inflation stood at 2.7 percent—the same rate recorded in September.

Monetary authorities earlier expected that full-year inflation would rise toward the high end of its forecast range, or 3.1 percent, due to prolonged dry spell in the countryside, rising global oil prices, and base effects.

But according to recent reports taken up by the Monetary Board, the improvement in farm harvests is said to have eased the slowdown in agricultural production, likely raising the output in the fourth quarter to a level much better than that of last year.

'07 INFLATION/ B13

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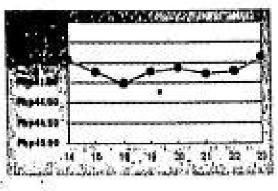

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STOCK MARKET

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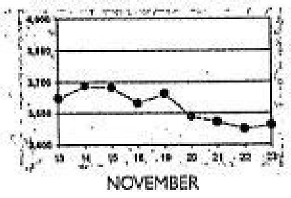

NOVEMBER

US market concerns still expected to weigh on local stocks

INVESTORS ARE EXPECTED TO TURN THEIR attention to market developments abroad due to a dearth of market-moving news this week, some brokers said.

"The volatility and uncertainty surrounding the US markets will weigh heavily on the mind of investors, which may [lead to] continued caution in making (investment) moves," AB Capital Securities analyst

US MARKET/ B3

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No Free Lunch: Why oil prices are rising /B2

Gov't to revise economic targets for 2008-2010 /B8

As bad loans are cleaned up, small borrowers suffer

By Daxim L. Lucas

(First of two parts)

SPECIAL REPORT

ALEX MARAVILLA'S HOME IN BACOOR, Cavite, is a simple one.

It has a floor area of 22 square meters on a 36-square-meter lot, along a row of similarly sized socialized housing units.

He bought the house through a 25-year loan from the National Home Mortgage and Finance Corp. (NHMFC) and has been paying it regularly through deductions by his company from his monthly paycheck.

In March 2007, however, Maravilla was surprised to receive a demand letter from Bahay Financial Services (BFS)—a firm he had never dealt with in the past—ordering him to settle his obligations in a month's time or face legal action.

In the letter, he was informed that NHMFC had sold his loan to Balikatan Housing Finance Inc. whose portfolio was being managed by BFS.

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AS BAD LOANS/ B13

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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 4878 series of 2007

Why oil prices are rising

No Free Lunch

Cielito F. Habito

LAST TIME WE SAW PETROLEUM PRICES rise rapidly (in 2005), our economy slowed down, overall prices shot up, and joblessness rose. World crude oil prices had shot up then from around $30 per barrel to above $60.

Another round of petroleum product price increases is now upon us. After hovering around $50-60 in the last two years, crude oil prices are now above $90, and expected to breach $100 soon. The domestic oil industry has already raised fuel prices by around 50 centavos a liter, and Filipinos are bracing themselves for another round of difficulties that are expected to arise from these recent developments. Why are oil prices rising so rapidly?

Supply and demand

Oil prices must be rising either because supply is falling, demand is rising, or—as is happening now—a combination of both is happening.

Whether the rising demands or tightening supplies are occurring naturally or because of artificial manipulation by certain elements is another question. Suspicions abound that manipulative actions by big players, including large oil companies and politicians, are really behind the price movements.

A November 2006 IMF working paper presents evidence that politicians are able to reduce petroleum product prices in regulated systems in periods preceding an election. Others point to the key role of US government decisions on building up or withdrawing from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve (SPR). One thing is clear: the oil industry is far from a competitive market, and its oligopolistic nature (translation: existence of a few dominant players) makes it prone to manipulation.

Natural forces

What are the natural (i.e. non-manipulative) trends driving supply and demand?

Most prominent on the demand side is the rapid growth in major economies, particularly the booming giant economies of China and India, which together account for well over a third of world population. Consider these: By 2010 India will have 36 times more cars than it did in 1990, and China will have 90 times more. According to the Energy Research Institute of Beijing, more than 4.5 million new vehicles are added to Chinese roads every year, and China will have more cars than the United States by 2030.

But apart from current consumption, China and India are further boosting current oil demands by creating oil reserves similar to the US SPR. Apart from building energy security, this is one way by which both countries are relieving the pressure of mounting foreign exchange reserves from large trade surpluses.

Beyond China and India, emerging economies in Southeast Asia and elsewhere are also growing rapidly, and along with it, their oil consumption. Note that oil consumption in growing economies tends to grow much faster than the economy itself does, as increasing incomes lead consumers to have more energy-intensive lifestyles.

Supply factors

On the other hand, world oil supplies can't cope with the rapid rise in demand because of a variety of factors. One, politically based supply disruptions keep occurring in major oil producing countries. Most recent ones include bombings in major oil facilities in Nigeria, Afghanistan and Yemen. Two, refinery capacity worldwide has not been growing in tandem with petroleum product demands. Often cited is the fact that no new oil refineries have been built in the US since the 1990s, while 50 had been shut down for environmental violations. Three, the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (Opec), which together account for two-thirds of the world's oil reserves and close to half of the world's oil production, manages supplies to deliberately keep prices high. Adding volatility to the market is Opec's lack of spare production (i.e. pumping) capacity that makes it ill-equipped to deal with demand surges. Four, oil supplies from non-Opec countries have only been growing moderately. And five, there is a wide (but not undisputed) belief that the world has already reached "peak oil"—i.e. world oil reserves are now on a decline given that no new major oil fields have been discovered in the last 36 years.

Conspiracy?

But many are unconvinced that oil price movements are entirely the result of natural market forces. Apart from the IMF study mentioned above, a favorite suspect appears to be the Bush administration, whose alleged ties to the Texas-based US oil industry lead critics to believe that government moves on the SPR are actually meant to benefit the industry. The SPR had been raised from 300 to 700 million barrels in recent years, and this year the Bush administration has further decided to boost it further to 1.5 billion barrels. The problem is, US government purchases for the reserve, amounting to about 125,000 barrels a day, have added significantly to market demand, pushing prices higher than they would be. The arguments are too complicated to explain here, but Googling "oil price manipulation" on the Internet would give you sampling of all the conspiracy theories that are going around. And I haven't even begun to talk of alleged manipulation within our country itself.

Conspiracy or not, oil prices are on the rise and the effects on the economy will be significant. While the peso appreciation helps cushion the impact, the numbers tell the story: a peso rise from 56 to 43 per dollar is an appreciation of 23 percent, but an oil price rise of $60 to $100 per barrel is a rise of 66 percent. *Talong-talo pa rin.*

Comments welcome at chabito@ateneo.edu

Gov't borrowings down 21% to ₱410.5B in 10 mos

By Michelle V. Remo

BORROWINGS BY THE NATIONAL GOVernment hit P410.47 billion in the first ten months of the year, down 21 percent from P522.64 billion in the same period last year.

The government borrows from foreign and domestic sources largely to pay maturing debts and fund its expenditure requirements that cannot be covered by its revenues.

Data from the Department of Finance showed that of the borrowings obtained in the first 10 months, 78 percent or P321 billion was used to pay liabilities that were falling due.

Of the total amount, P110.83 billion came from foreign sources—including multilateral agencies and foreign governments that extend official development assistance (ODA), and investors in the international capital market who purchased sovereign bonds issued by the government.

The biggest providers of ODAs are the Japan Bank for International Cooperation, the Asian Development Bank and the World Bank. ODAs are concessional in nature and has lower interest rates than commercial borrowings.

The foreign borrowings for the first 10 months included the $1 billion raised from the sale of global bonds in January.

About P299 billion in borrowings during the period came from the domestic capital market through the sale of treasury bills and bonds.

The government has adopted the policy of borrowing more from domestic sources to protect itself from too much exposure to foreign exchange volatility. The government learned the hard way when the depreciation of the peso bloated the peso value of its foreign currency-denominated debts from late 1990s to early 2000s.

Because of lower interest rates, the government spent less to pay for interests on its maturing obligations. The 91-day T-bill rate, for instance, was assumed to average at 4 percent to 5 percent this year when the borrowing program for 2007 was drafted. The actual rate was only about 3 percent. The peso strengthening helped trim the peso value of government's debts that are denominated in foreign currencies.

The government's 10-month borrowings already exceeded the P380.951 billion originally programmed for the entire year. The excess was partly due to the government's issuance of Retail Treasury bonds (RTBs) in July.

The government originally intended to sell only P8 billion in RTBs, but the market showed huge appetite for the securities, prompting the sale of more than P50 billion worth of RTBs.

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Zest-O sets sights on Indonesia in '08

Beverage firm also eyeing Vietnam, Dubai

By Ronnel W. Domingo

BEVERAGE FIRM ZEST-O CORP. WILL OPEN A PRODUCTION facility in Indonesia in 2008, in line with its plans to expand overseas.

Zest-O chair Alfredo M. Yao said in an interview that the company is now trying to complete documentation requirements, which will enable it to take a crack at Southeast Asia's largest market by next year.

The firm is also looking at possible operations in Vietnam, Cambodia and Dubai in the United Arab Emirates, Yao said.

"We chose to start within Southeast Asia, particularly Indonesia, because it is one of the more matured and advanced markets in the region," he explained.

"We do not know yet how much we will be investing in Indonesia, but we definitely want equipment to be online in 2008," he added. "We will be locating in Jakarta."

Also, Yao said Zest-O's approach was to gain a foothold of the Indonesian market, tailoring products to suit local tastes.

"We are not going to simply bring there our existing product line," he said. "We have identified (an initial) product that we would launch, but we are keeping it under wraps."

Zest-O's products range from fruit sodas and purees to kitchen condiments.

Having carved out for itself 80 percent of the domestic ready-to-drink juice market, Zest-O is now exporting mango puree to China, Australia, New Zealand, Korea, Singapore, the United States and Europe.

Also, the company has diversified into production of toothpaste (Beam) and noodles (Quickchow), and holds the local franchise for the RC Cola soft drink.

Last Nov. 18, Zest-O was conferred the Most Admired Asean Enterprise in the innovation category of the inaugural Asean Business Awards, which were given out during the Asean Business and Investment Summit held in Singapore.

Zest-O was cited for its use of doy packaging in its products.

Aboitiz Power set to squeeze more juice from Magat

By Abigail L. Ho

ABOITIZ POWER CORP. AIMS TO SQUEEZE more power from its 360-megawatt (MW) Magat hydropower facility in Isabela by making it operate more efficiently.

In an interview with reporters, Aboitiz Power president and chief executive Erramon Aboitiz said the Magat plant was no longer expandable in terms of additional capacity.

But the plant could be made to run more efficiently so it could produce more power than it was currently generating, he added.

"We're looking at a little expansion ... by increasing its efficiency," Aboitiz said. "We don't have the numbers yet, we're still getting quotes as of now. We can probably maximize the output a little bit."

Aboitiz said that, on the average, the Magat plant is running at just about 30 percent of its capacity.

"But that's a function of the available water," he explained. "So all you have to do is to take as much advantage of the water [available] and to try to run the plant as efficiently as possible."

In terms of the required investment for the project, he said that the company is still in the process of studying this.

The International Finance Corp., the private sector arm of the World Bank, last month disbursed a $105-million loan to SN Aboitiz Power Inc. (Snap), the Aboitiz Power subsidiary that owned the Magat plant, to finance the balance of the $530-million cost of the hydropower facility.

For the Magat project, IFC is providing longer term financing than what is currently available on commercial terms. It is also acting as anchor lender to allow Snap to raise additional funds from foreign and local banks.

The $105-million IFC loan is part of a $380-million loan that Snap secured to partially finance the balance of the Magat plant.

US market …

From page B1

Prince Yeung wrote in a weekly note.

"With a lack of fresh leads domestically, the PSEi will continue to be guided by market movements abroad," Yeung added. "(This) week will be a battle between the strength of the local economy and fundamentals versus negative developments abroad."

The Philippine Stock Exchange index last week lost 104.5 points, or 2.9 percent, to end at 3,494.44 near a two-month low as credit worries continued to pester US and other regional markets, AB Capital noted.

Also, Campos Lanuza & Co. said the market may still see some selling given worries over oil prices surging to almost $100 a barrel.

According to Joseph Roxas of Eagle Equities Inc., the market may also track developments regarding the sale of government shares in PNOC-Energy Development Corp. to a consortium led by First Generation Corp. amid opposition from lawmakers who claimed the sale was illegal. *Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson*

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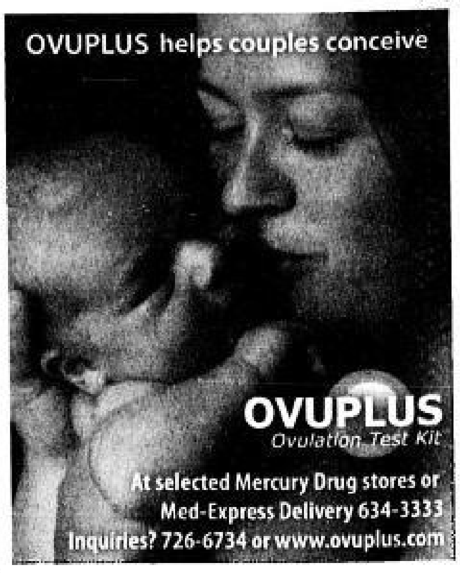
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Model	SRP	DP	12	18	24	36	48	60	72
Lancer 1.6 GLX M/T	695,000	85,000	53,494	36,613	29,186	20,799	16,644	14,328	12,903
Lancer 1.6 GLS CVT	768,000	90,000	58,539	40,066	31,947	22,766	18,219	15,684	14,124

Model	SRP	DP	12	18	24	36	48	60	72
Adventure GLX - Diesel	773,000	70,000	58,740	40,204	32,059	22,847	18,263	15,739	14,174
Adventure GLS Sport - Diesel	840,000	70,000	64,115	43,882	34,989	24,934	19,954	17,177	15,469
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BSP sees no need to match US Fed rate cuts

Rate differential no longer a big factor that affects capital inflows, says exec

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE BANGKO SENTRAL WON'T necessarily match the US Federal Reserve's future monetary move as differentials between local and offshore interest rates become less of a factor behind foreign capital flows, a central bank official said.

Dismissing the perception of some analysts that the BSP's recent interest rate cuts mimicked the moves of the US Fed, BSP Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo said: "It's not necessary to match the US Fed. Their economic conditions are different. They are having problems with their current account and fiscal position, as well as their capital account."

The Philippines, on the other hand, has been posting surpluses in both capital and current accounts, he added.

Robust foreign exchange remittances from overseas Filipinos and the strong inflows of foreign investments are expected to drive up the country's foreign reserves and external payments account to record surpluses this year. From January to October this year, the balance of payments posted a surplus of $7.85 billion.

The BOP measures the foreign exchange transactions between the domestic economy and the rest of the world.

When the US Fed cut its rates in recent months to avert risks of an economic recession due to the subprime woes, certain economists said the BSP had to follow suit to temper the peso's appreciation.

Whenever benchmark interest rates in the US go down, global investors are expected to scout for higher-yielding assets from emerging markets. This put pressure on central banks in these markets to either mop up additional liquidity by intervening at the foreign exchange markets or to reduce interest rates to temper portfolio inflows.

But instead of curbing the flow of volatile portfolio investments—also called hot money due to their volatile nature—the BSP's interest rate cut in October even attracted more money to the stock market.

Some analysts believe that the BSP's huge foreign exchange losses due to its intervention in the market has limited its means of tempering the peso rise. As such, they said the central bank was likely to use more of the interest rate (reduction) tack.

But Guinigundo said monetary stability and not profitability was the central bank's mandate.

The BSP trimmed its foreign exchange losses to P48.29 billion from January to September from a about P50 billion at end-July.

Philcomsat board election questioned

By Daxim L. Lucas

THE COURT OF APPEALS HAS made "final and executory" its decision upholding the government-led Locsin-Poblador group as the legitimate board of Philippine Communications Satellite Corp. (Philcomsat), according to documents provided by the group last week.

This developed a few days after Malacañang nominated a fresh set of directors to sit on the boards of Philcomsat and its mother company, Philippine Overseas Telecommunications Corp. (POTC).

Moot and academic

Officials from the Locsin-Poblador camp said the CA's decision effectively brings into question the validity of last week's board elections, where a rival group of private shareholders recovered control of both sequestered firms after seven years under the control of the directors nominated by the Presidential Commission on Good Government (PCGG).

However, Philcomsat director Erlinda I. Bildner, who leads the private shareholders' group denied the claim of the rival faction.

"This decision is moot and academic because it pertains to a case that happened in 1998," she said. "This is totally irrelevant."

She described the Locsin-Poblador group as being "desperate" after Malacañang replaced them as nominees last week.

"They know their days of being able to claim to be the legitimate board are numbered," she added.

Jurisdiction

It remains unclear how the situation would play out, with the new government nominees—voted in by representatives from Malacañang—contending with the original PCGG nominees who still control listed subsidiary Philcomsat Holdings Corp.

According to the Locsin-Poblador group, the CA decision became final and executory after Clerk of Court Teresita R. Marigomen made an "entry of judgment" on the ruling of Sixth Division Associate Justice Martin S. Villarama Jr. The ruling upheld an earlier Makati court order saying that the Sandiganbayan, not the regular court, had jurisdiction over the cases involving the sequestered firm.

"The [resolution] has, on July 2, 2007, become final and executory and is hereby recorded in the Book of Entries of Judgment," Marigonmen wrote.

Division Clerk of Court Lilia Mercedes Encarnacion A. Gepty added that "considering the Judicial Records Division verification report dated Oct. 15, 2007, stating that 'no motion for reconsideration and/or no notice of appeal to the Supreme Court has been received/filed as per docket book of entry,' the court resolves to issue entry of judgment and the records of the case remanded, the court's resolution dated June 8, 2007 having become final and executory as of July 2, 2007."

The rival camp led by Erlinda I. Bildner earlier countered that the dismissal was based on a mere technicality.

"The Court of Appeals merely dismissed a petition filed by several aggrieved stockholders," an earlier statement from Bildner said.

Root of the problem

The CA case stemmed from a supposed 1998 Philcomsat Special stockholders' meeting where then PCGG nominees Benito Araneta and Ronaldo Salonga were elected as directors. Several stockholders complained to the Securities and Exchange Commission about the lack of quorum and lack of notice to the stockholders.

The SEC then issued an injunction restraining Araneta and Salonga from acting as directors and officers of Philcomsat, and all petitions filed by Araneta and Salonga questioning the SEC decision were dismissed by the CA, Bildner's group said.

NIA to hit '07 rehab target

By Riza T. Olchondra

BY THE END OF THIS WEEK, irrigation facilities covering 46,697 hectares of arable land would have already been restored and rehabilitated, the National Irrigation Administration (NIA) said in a report.

This represents 84.9 percent of the agency's target to restore irrigation facilities covering 55,000 hectares of arable land for 2007.

As of the end of last week, the NIA has restored and rehabilitated 43,297 hectares, or 78.72 percent of target, in step with ongoing initiatives to boost farm productivity and raise incomes in the countryside.

NIA Administrator Marcelino Tugaoen Jr. said that early this year, the government had earmarked P9.419 billion for irrigation projects in the first half of this year. Of the total, P3.127 billion was for the restoration and rehabilitation of national and communal irrigation facilities across the country for the entire year.

Tugaoen said the repair and rehabilitation of irrigation facilities had become more vital with the reduced supply of water in many farm production areas as a result of denuded watersheds.

Thus, NIA spent P5.497 billion in the first half alone. This represents 58.17 percent of the total budget for irrigation works, inclusive of the Calamity Assistance and Rehabilitation Effort program.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur Yap said in a statement that higher spending for the construction, repair and rehabilitation of irrigation facilities in key palay-producing areas was a crucial element of the government's goal of attaining rice self-sufficiency by 2010, raise farmers' incomes, and make this staple cheaper for low-income consumers.

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RP prepares for risks posed by global credit crunch

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE PHILIPPINES IS BRACING FOR THE risks posed by a prolonged global credit crunch linked to the US subprime crisis, and the government is confident the economy is in a better position to hurdle the challenges this time, compared to how it fared during the Asian financial crisis.

Reacting to the Asian Development Bank's warning that a prolonged global financial market volatility and persistent risk aversion could lead to a reversal of capital flows to emerging East Asia, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Deputy Governor Diwa Guinigundo said the country was in a strong position to face this external turbulence.

He said the Philippines was able to hurdle the spillover impact of the US subprime crisis well so far this year, based on the BSP's assessment.

The expectation is that the crisis would drag on at least though 2008 as big western banks take a beating from the crisis due to their exposure in structured products that contained subprime mortgages as underlying assets.

Subprime mortgages back housing loans given to borrowers with imperfect credit history and little equity. Rising subprime delinquencies in the United States have spooked global financial markets and caused sporadic global investor aversion to assets from emerging markets.

Guinigundo said he couldn't say how big the risk of a capital reversal could be, but noted that strong economic fundamentals could carry the country through the worst of this global financial turbulence.

"I think in general, the economy is more resilient. We have robust growth, healthy reserves level and a better fiscal position compared to what we had during the Asian financial crisis," he said.

Also, he said the country's financial sector was much stronger now compared to the situation 10 years ago.

"There are risk management systems broadly in place. There are also existing rules in terms of their (banks') investments especially in structured products, what un-

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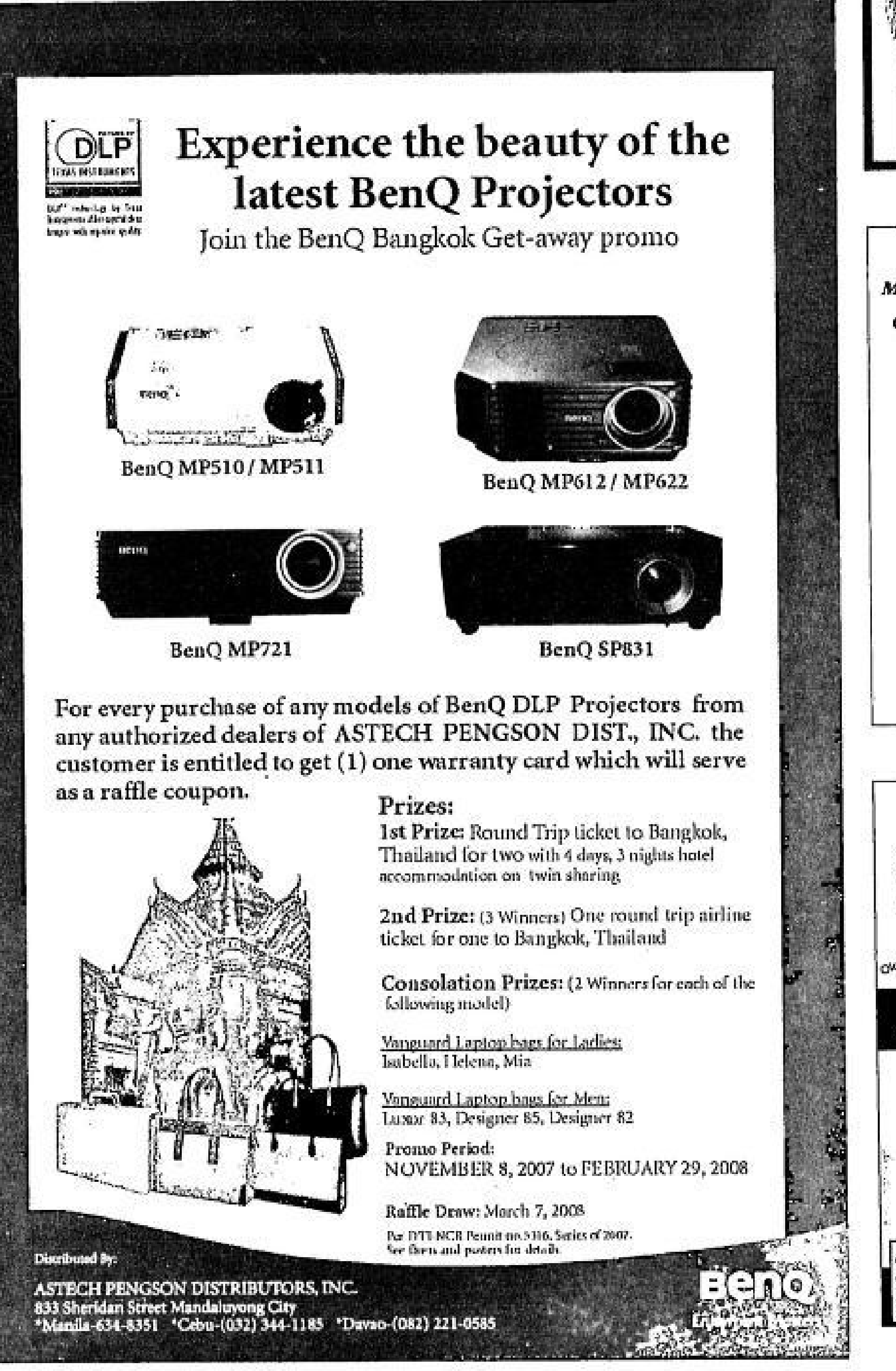
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THE NorthRail project—despite obvious economic and social benefits to the Filipino people—is the subject of a great deal of disinformation. The people deserve to know the facts *now*.

NorthRail approved at the highest levels

1. China's two Presidents, two Prime Ministers, two Speakers of Parliament, and three Ambassadors to Manila supported the project, China's first major undertaking of its kind in Southeast Asia.

2. On the Philippine Government side, those who negotiated or approved and endorsed NorthRail were: then National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) secretary-general Romulo Neri; the NEDA's Investment Coordinating Committee (ICC) headed by the Secretary of Finance; former Foreign Secretary Delia Albert, and then Finance Secretary Jose Camacho and his successors, Juanita Amatong and Cesar Purisima; Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez, then Government Corporate Counsel Agnes Devanadera; Finance Undersecretary Robert Tan; and the NEDA Board chaired by President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo.

   They planned and approved the project; they negotiated the terms of the loan agreement to finance its construction. *Any complaint or inquiry about NorthRail should be directed to them.*

3. President Macapagal-Arroyo and Speaker Jose de Venecia were the ones who appealed to the leaders of China to undertake the railway project, which was abandoned for more than 30 years and the railway tracks taken over by over 40,000 squatter families. Appeals by the Philippines to the governments of Japan, South Korea, the United States, Spain, France, Italy, Austria, Germany and Canada all failed because of the problem of illegal settlers. It was only the Chinese government that agreed to resettle the squatters.

4. China and the Philippines signed last April 2005—during Chinese President Hun Jintao's state visit to the Philippines—the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for Section 2 of the project from Malolos in Bulacan to Clark in Pampanga. Then Finance Secretary Cesar Purisima signed on behalf of the Philippine government; Yang Zilin, governor of the Export-Import Bank of China, signed for the People's Republic of China. Those who witnessed for the Philippines were Foreign Secretary Alberto Romulo and Transportation and Communications Secretary Larry Mendoza.

NorthRail is being financed and built by Chinese gov't

5. The financing and building of NorthRail is a Bilateral Agreement between China and the Philippines, where the Chinese Government designated a 100-percent state-owned company, the China National Machinery and Equipment Corp. (CNMEC), to be the Prime Contractor for the project. CNMEC is one of China's top engineering firms; it is ranked No. 37 by the Global Engineering News Record of the 225 Largest International Contractors.

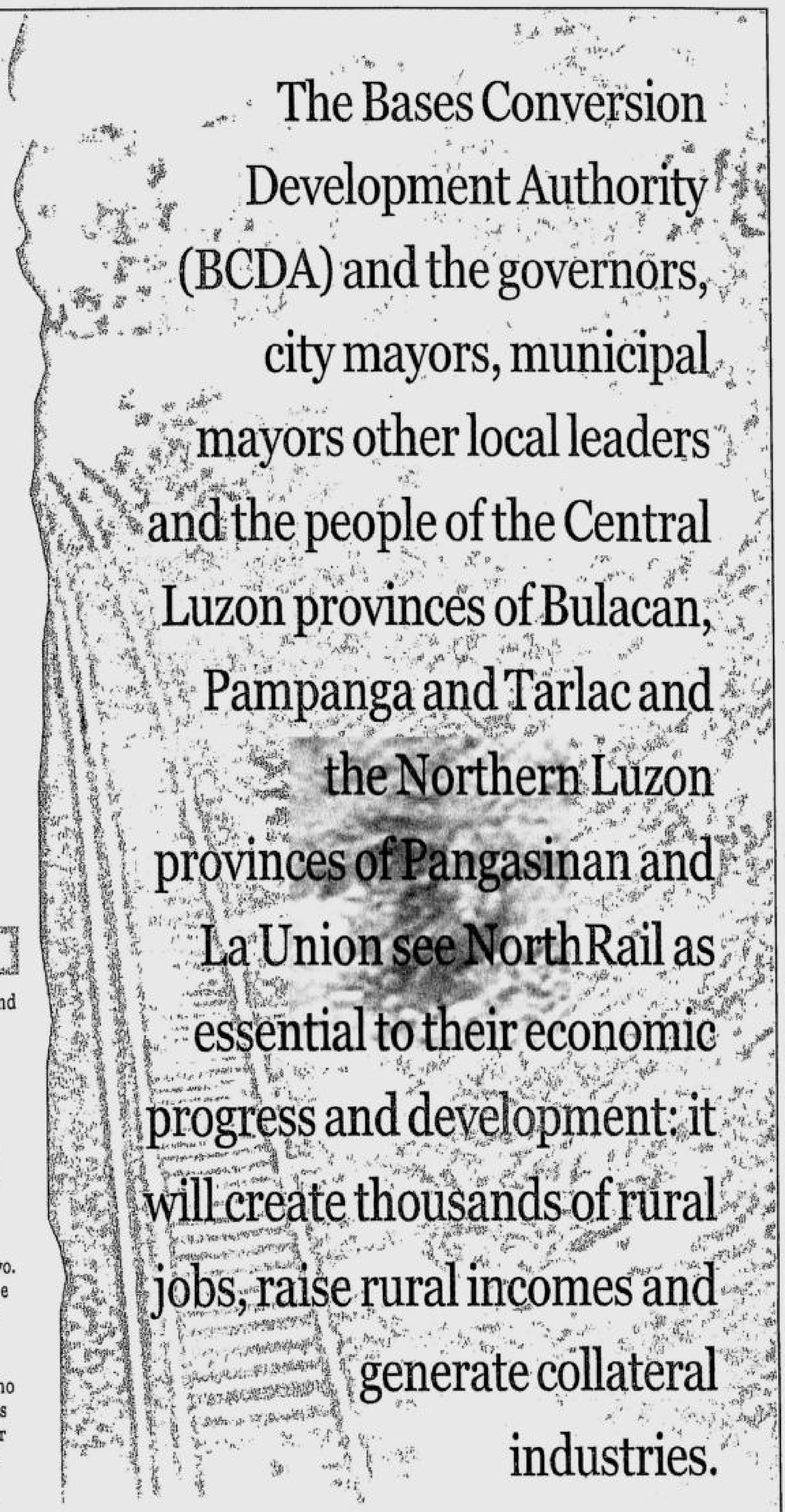
6. The procurement of the NorthRail project is covered by a binding executive agreement—the China-RP Loan Agreement of February 26, 2004. The loan under this agreement is a "tied loan." The project is being financed and constructed by the Chinese Government without the involvement of any Filipino contractor.

7. NorthRail is financed by the Chinese government and is being constructed by a Chinese government subsidiary. In comparison, the ZTE is a "private initiative", in the words of Rep. Edwin Uy, chairman of the House Committee on Bases Conversion.

Chinese gov't calls contract "above board"

8. The Chinese Government called this concessional credit a "preferential loan for an important ally." Through the Export-Import Bank of China, the Chinese Government extended a credit facility of US$400 million (not US$500 million) at only 3 percent interest over 20 years (not 10 years). This credit facility covers 95 percent (not the standard 85 percent) of NorthRail's project cost. The Philippine Government will put up the remaining 5 percent as counterpart fund (about US$21 million).

9. Then Chinese Ambassador to the Philippine Wu Hungbo repeatedly stressed that the contract is "above-board, and we have nothing to hide."



The Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA) and the governors, city mayors, municipal mayors other local leaders and the people of the Central Luzon provinces of Bulacan, Pampanga and Tarlac and the Northern Luzon provinces of Pangasinan and La Union see NorthRail as essential to their economic progress and development: it will create thousands of rural jobs, raise rural incomes and generate collateral industries.

Destroying the myths and fiction

NorthRail is the first modern, entirely new railway construction for the country. It will replace the abandoned PNR line going north that was completely abandoned more than 30 years ago.

10. NorthRail is not a one-track but a double-track railway equivalent to 62.4 kilometers. A kilometer of double-track railway costs roughly P360 million based on 2005 figures—and not the critics' unsubstantiated claim of P889 per km of track.

11. NorthRail will have six stations, a depot and maintenance yard, communication links, 21 Diesel Multiple Units (84 train cars), a signaling system, grade separation at road crossings, retaining walls, eight major bridges, a viaduct section, and cost of additional rights of way. The total project cost is $503.4 million broken down into civil and track works, right of way including land acquisitions and utilities diversion, signaling and communications, rolling stock and other costs.

12. When completed, NorthRail from Caloocan to Malolos will be the cheapest, most efficient mass-transport system in the country. The basic fare would be P10 plus P1 for every kilometer, affordable at a time of spiraling oil prices, transportation and freight costs.

The benefits of NorthRail

The Bases Conversion Development Authority (BCDA) and the governors, city mayors, municipal mayors other local leaders and the people of the Central Luzon provinces of Bulacan, Pampanga and Tarlac and the Northern Luzon provinces of Pangasinan and La Union see NorthRail as essential to their economic progress and development: it will create thousands of rural jobs, raise rural incomes and generate collateral industries.

Keep politics out of NorthRail

The NorthRail project is already underway, undertaken under the best possible terms. It should be kept above partisan politics.

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Further cuts in cost of shipping sought

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE NATIONAL Competitiveness Council is pushing for further reduction in outbound shipping costs as well as related measures to perk up the logistics sector.

Meneleo J. Carlos Jr., the NCC champion for infrastructure, said the group was aiming at bringing down the cost of exporting products to $326 from $341 per 20-foot container.

Carlos said this could be realized by allowing chassis-container (Cha-Ro) as part of the roll-on roll-off (Ro-Ro) and by fast-tracking the development of ports along the Central Nautical Highway.

The CNH include the ports of Aroroy and Cawayan in Masbate, Daangbantayan in Cebu, and Mambajao and Benoni in Camiguin.

"Cha-Ro will allow export-import containers to be transshipped domestically through Ro-Ro at a lower cost," he said.

Carlos added the extension by another year of 90-percent discount on wharfage for export-import cargoes could also help.

He also said the scanning fee for 10-footer container vans could be reduced by 90 percent from $25 to $5 as a response of Malacañang to the clamor of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Philippine Exporters Confederation.

In a related development, Carlos said a strategic study for the development of Subic, Clark and Batangas into a logistics corridor would start soon.

He said the Center for Research and Communication was working with the Subic-Clark Alliance Development Corp. on the terms of reference for the development of a logistics master plan.

In preparation for this, the bidding and award of contracts to operate Batangas International Port and Subic Bay International Port (Terminal 2) needed to be fast-tracked, he added.

He said expressway and railway projects that would link Subic and Clark to Batangas must also be hastened.

He was referring to the South Luzon Expressway rehabilitation and extension project; the Subic-Clark-Tarlac expressway project; the North and South rail projects, including their linkage; the Southern Tagalog Arterial Road Phase II; and the C5-North Luzon Expressway-SLEX link.

RP ...

From page B5

derlying instruments can support those structured products like CDOs (collateralized debt obligations)," Guinigundo said.

As early as 2005, the BSP has slapped capital charges on structured products like CDOs and credit-linked notes (CLNs) held by banks. The charges depend on the rating of the issuer or the rating of collateral in case of structured products issued by special purpose vehicles assigned by international credit agencies like Moody's, Standard & Poor's and Fitch ratings.

A structured product refers to a financial instrument where the return is a function of one or more underlying indices, such as interest rates, equities and exchange rates. There may also be embedded derivatives such as swaps, forwards, options, caps, and floors that reshape the risk-return pattern.

Philippine banks have very minimal exposures in structured products such as CDOs and CLNs and none of them contained underlying assets that were credit-risky like the subprime mortgages in the United States.

In the November issue of the Asia Bond Monitor, the ADB said that while strong economic growth and improved financial systems along with limited exposure to US subprime mortgages had helped curb spillover effects of global credit woes on the region, downside risks to regional economic and financial market trends remained and wider ramifications could not be ruled out in the future.

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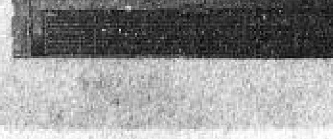

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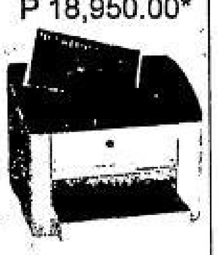

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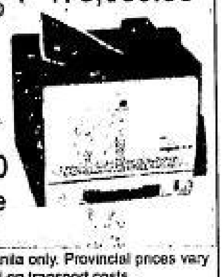

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Abu Dhabi firm to invest in RP

By Doris C. Dumlao

ABU DHABI-BASED NMC CONGLOMERATE owned by Indian businessman and philanthropist Bavaguttu Raghuram Shetty plans to invest in two of the Philippines' most promising sectors—medical tourism and information technology.

B.R. Shetty, who visited the Philippines for the first time last week for the opening of the Philippine office of NMC subsidiary UAE Exchange, said in a briefing that the group's top country representative was now scouting for good local hospitals in need of additional equity.

"We are looking into having joint ventures in some hospitals," B.R. Shetty said last Friday. "We'll have some equity in an existing hospital and upgrade it to the highest level."

He said the Philippines could draw more medical tourists, for highly specialized treatment like kidney transplants, which are not allowed in other parts of the world.

He added the Philippines has the opportunity to develop a strong medical tourism industry like the one in Thailand's capital city of Bangkok partly due to the quality of Filipino labor.

B.R. Shetty, who moved to the United Arab Emirates in the 1970s, is the founder and CEO of the NMC conglomerate.

Healthcare is the group's core business but NMC has diversified into financial services, distribution of pharmaceuticals and medical supplies, food, jewelry, hotel and real estate and engineering.

NMC operates eight leading healthcare institutions in the region, including three NMC Hospitals in Abu Dhabi, three in Dubai, one in Bahrain and the New Medical Centre in Sharjah.

Its subsidiary, UAE Exchange, is the biggest player in the remittance business in the United Arab Emirates and one of the leading firms in the Middle East.

UAE Exchange accounts for 38 percent of all inward remittances coming from UAE.

Gov't to revise economic targets for 2008-2010

By Michelle V. Remo

THE GOVERNMENT WILL REVIEW ITS macroeconomic assumptions and targets for 2008-2010 given recent developments in the Philippine and world economies.

The Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC) will discuss the possible changes in its next meeting, according to a ranking official of the Department of Finance who declined to be identified.

"After decisions have been finalized, the updated medium term macroeconomic targets will be presented before the Cabinet members," the official said.

The DBCC is an interagency body tasked with setting the government's macroeconomic goals and policies.

Besides the DOF, other DBCC members are the Department of Budget and Management, National Economic and Development Authority and Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

Officials said it was necessary to review macroeconomic targets and goals for the rest of the Arroyo administration's term as some targets this year have been missed.

The export growth target for 2007, for instance, was set at 11 percent but exports have been growing at only single-digit levels.

The peso was assumed to average between 48 and 50 to a dollar this year, but is now much stronger, even br
ing the 42-mark recently.

The growth of the overall eco
as measured by the gross do
product, was expected to hit be
6.2 and 7.1 percent for 2007.

But in the first half, actual
growth already hit 7.3 percent
strongest in almost two decades.

Dubai crude price, meanwhile
assumed to range between $62 an
a barrel, but has recently surpass
$80-a-barrel mark.

The official said the higher-th
pected price of Dubai crude wou
taken into account in reviewing t
flation forecast for 2008, which w
tially set at 3 to 4 percent.

Hyundai Hallmarks
40th Anniversary
With Global Milestones

As early as now, Hyundai is already in high spirits in anticipation of another milestone in its remarkable history. On December 29, Hyundai Motor Company (HMC) will turn another year bolder as it celebrates the 40th anniversary of its foundation. Hallmarking the brilliance of its 40-year legacy in the automotive business is an official emblem that expresses the spirit of a forward-looking, progressive organization, adhering to the highest level of responsiveness and responsibility towards its customers, the community, and the environment. The emblem is executed with two simple yet elegant calligraphic brush strokes, combining elements of past and future into a dynamic silhouette of a car.

40 40th Anniversary
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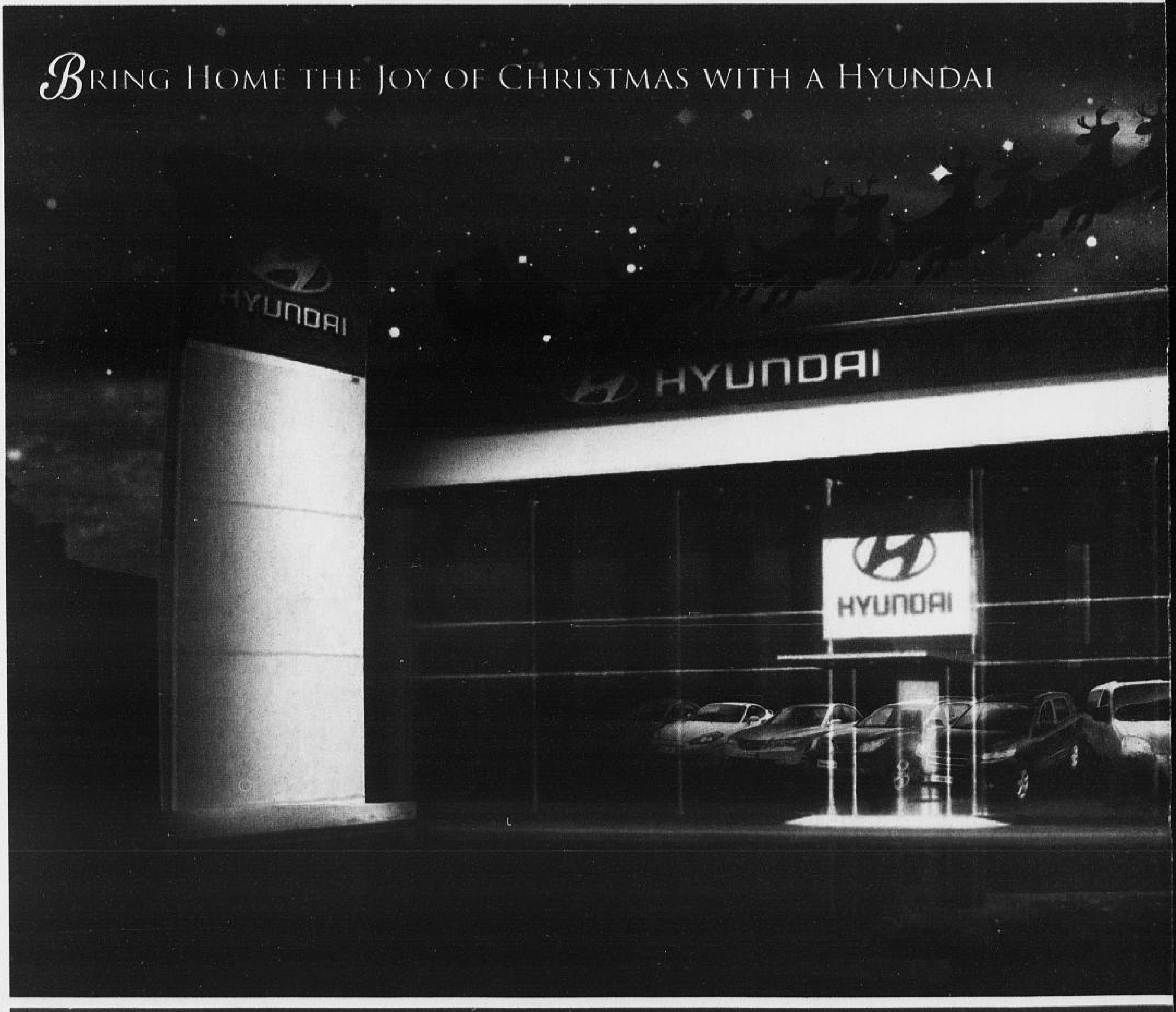
At 40, Hyundai's accelerated drive as a refined and confident automaker has anything but slowed down as it continues to reap brisk global sales and accolades. Compared to the same period last year, Hyundai's worldwide sales for the 10 months of the year rose by 5.4%, reaching 2.14 million units. Korean sales are up one notch at 8.9 percent based on month-on-month figures, translating to 55,224 units, while vigorous export shipments from Korean factories propelled a remarkable 37.5% rise, equivalent to 119,304 units.

Further amplifying Hyundai's global brand presence is the resounding approval of customers and experts alike on Hyundai vehicles. Based on the Annual Car Reliability Survey conducted by Consumer Reports in 2007, Hyundai scored only 11 points in the Problems-per-100-vehicles category, highlighting exceptional consumer confidence in Hyundai. In the Initial Quality Survey of J.D. Power and Associates in 2006, Hyundai was named "Best Quality 'non-premium' car brand", while The Washington Post remarked that "Hyundai is one of the fastest-moving companies on the global automotive track", also in 2006.

Escalating global brand value

With the remarkable performance of Hyundai translated to sales and customer satisfaction, Hyundai outperformed its 2005 standing as its global brand value rose by as much as 17% in 2006, based on reports from BusinessWeek. Hyundai also displayed a constant upward momentum as a competent automotive player as it was ranked the world's 6th largest automaker in 2006.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More companies to sell shares in '08, says First Metro

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

INVESTMENT BANK FIRST METRO INvestment Corp. of the Metrobank Group expects four companies to raise at least P34 billion in capital through an initial public offering next year.

FMIC executive vice president Jose Marcelo said Gokongwei-controlled budget airline Cebu Pacific plans to push ahead early next year with its IPO, which may raise roughly $300 million for the company.

FMIC, UBS Group and ING Group have been tapped as underwriters for the proposed offer, proceeds of which would be used to finance the expansion of Cebu Pacific's fleet.

Aside from Cebu Pacific, Marcelo said a conglomerate, which can't be identified as of this time, intends to raise between P12 and P15 billion to bankroll expansion plans.

Likewise, a property company will sell part of its shares to the public to generate P2 to P3 billion in new funds.

Another retailing firm is also interested to sell P2 to P3 billion worth of shares to raise funds for its own expansion activities.

Marcelo said concerns surrounding subprime lending problems in the United States, which are bothering US and Asian stock markets, may be eased by the first quarter next year as investors begin to see the extent of the damage.

This could consequently brighten prospects for Asian stock markets in 2008.

FMIC took part in the market debuts this year of money transfer company iRemit Inc., beauty products firm Splash Corp. and the share offer of steel products producer TKC Steel Corp.

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HARI: Double victory

At the other end of the victory spectrum, Hyundai Asia Resources, Inc. (HARI), the official distributor of Hyundai vehicles in the Philippines, made a kingly sweep of two more milestones to reinforce its positioning as a globally competitive ally of Hyundai in the automotive industry.

The first of the victories distinguished HARI for a second straight year as Distributor of the Year for the Asia Pacific Region during the 2007 Hyundai Motor Global Distributors Convention held recently in Hawaii, USA. Handpicked by Hyundai Motor Company from among 198 Hyundai distributors spread over 7 continents of the world, HARI's remarkable sales output and overall distributorship performance were heralded, distinguishing HARI in the league of Hyundai's best distributors.

The second victory was HARI's win of Excellence Awards in recognition of the exceptional skills of its expert technicians in Hyundai's 7th World Skills Olympics held in Chonan, South Korea. HARI's Gilbert Durna and Reggie Ramos bested over 72 technicians from 45 countries with an overall ranking of Excellent Skills, adding leverage to HARI's technical expertise in fortifying after-sales support.

HARI: Keeping customer king

Currently the country's Top 5 automotive brand, HARI's second win of the coveted Distributor of the Year award is the reaffirmation of HARI's continuing upward momentum, hallmarked by as much as 46% growth in sales, based on January to October 2007 CAMPI YTD report, compared to the same period last year, cornering 7.0% market share. The improved level of the Filipino consumer's confidence in the Hyundai brand is also precipitated by a 90% loyalty rating for genuine Hyundai parts and accessories, and by world-class operations that have earned for HARI dealerships the prestigious Elite Award in 2006.

"These achievements are early Christmas gifts, not just for HARI, but for Filipinos who continue to support the Hyundai brand. We share our triumphs with our beloved customers since they are the kings that drive our passion to become a refined and confident automotive brand," says Ma. Fe Perez-Agudo, HARI EVP & Chief Operating Officer.

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P88.4B in capital raised by listed firms as of Nov.

Follow-on offers accounted for more than half

By Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson

THE PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE SAID a record P88.42 billion in fresh capital has been raised so far this year by companies through initial public offerings, sale of additional new shares, issuance of stock rights and private placements.

Most companies tap the capital market to finance expansion plans.

PSE chair Jose Vitug said the amount raised so far was 57 percent higher than the P57.2 billion posted as of end-December 2006.

Data from the PSE research department showed that of the P88.4 billion in capital raised as of Nov. 23, P49.03 billion was from additional or follow-on offerings of new shares. This was 65 percent higher than the P29.7 billion as of December 2006. Companies that held follow-on offerings of primary shares this year were Filinvest Land Inc. (P5.9 billion), Rizal Commercial Banking Corp. (P5.7 billion), Union Bank of the Philippines (P5.04 billion), Alliance Global Inc. (P10.35 billion), Vista Land & Lifescapes Inc. (P14.52 billion), Philippine National Bank (P5.25 billion) and TKC Steel Corp. (P2.27 billion).

Firms that held IPOs as of Nov. 23 generated P17.8 billion, lower by 6.4 percent than the P19.02 billion recorded as of end-2006. These were Pacific Online Systems Corp., National Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils., Phoenix Petroleum Phils., Aboitiz Power Corp., GMA Network Inc., Anchor Land

P88.4B/B11

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Currencies

November 23, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.673129	1.000000	43.2670
Japan	Yen	0.006204	0.009216	0.3987
United Kingdom	Pound	1.389607	2.064400	89.3204
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.086529	0.128548	5.5619
Switzerland	Franc	0.611490	0.908430	39.3050
Canada	Dollar	0.682894	1.014507	43.8947
Singapore	Dollar	0.464387	0.689893	29.8496
Australia	Dollar	0.585686	0.870095	37.6464
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.794962	2.666596	115.3756
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.181187	0.269172	11.6463
Brunei	Dollar	0.462790	0.687521	29.7470
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000072	0.000107	0.0046
Thailand	Baht	0.021492	0.031928	1.3814
UAE	Dirham	0.183324	0.272346	11.7836
EU	Euro	1.000000	1.485600	64.2775
Korea	Won	0.000722	0.001072	0.0464
China	Yuan**	0.090786	0.134871	5.8355
Denmark	Kroner	0.134159	0.199306	8.6234
India	Rupee	0.017054	0.025336	1.0962
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.199151	0.295858	12.8009
New Zealand	Dollar	0.505808	0.751428	32.5120
Sweden	Kroner	0.107343	0.159469	6.8997
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.020816	0.030924	1.3380

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY time—Nov. 22, 2007
* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen. ** Asian time closing rate as of Nov. 22, 2007

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CANLUBANG	460,000	430,000
CAPITOL HILLS	40,000	-
CEBU COUNTRY CLUB	-	2,100,000
CELEBRITY SPORTS CLUB	100,000	80,000
CLUB FILIPINO	120,000	90,000
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EAGLERIDGE "B"	270,000	-
EAGLERIDGE "C"	350,000	300,000
FOREST HILLS "A"	100,000	60,000
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MAKATI SPORTS CLUB "B"	300,000	220,000
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MANILA SOUTHWOODS "B"	650,000	630,000
MANILA YACHT CLUB	200,000	190,000
MIMOSA (IND)	220,000	-
MT. MALARAYAT GOLD "A"	150,000	-
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ORCHARD GOLF CLUB "B"	280,000	-
ORCHARD GOLF CLUB "C"	300,000	-
QUEZON CITY SPORTS CLUB	150,000	130,000
ROCKWELL CLUB	300,000	230,000
SPA & LODGE	500,000	450,000
STA. ELENA "A"	-	1,700,000
STA. ELENA "B"	-	1,900,000
TAGAYTAY COUNTRY CLUB	300,000	280,000
TAGAYTAY HIGHLANDS	680,000	630,000
TAGAYTAY MIDLANDS	640,000	630,000
THE PALMS COUNTRY CLUB "A"	330,000	300,000
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Alta Vista A/B*/Corp.**	-	260,000/Pls. Call*
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Canlubang Golf	500,000	-
Canyon Woods	90,000	-
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PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of November 23, 2007)

52-WEEK HIGH	52-WEEK LOW	STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		BANKS					
17.5	6.8	Asiatrust Development Bank Inc.	8.3	8.5	8.3	8.5	57,000
73	43	Banco de Oro-EPCI Inc.	50.5	52	50.5	52	711,200
73.5	53	Bank of the Philippine Islands	61.5	62	61	61.5	1,913,100
748	540	China Banking Corp.	675	675	670	670	5,480
23.5	14	Citystate Savings Bank	23	23	23	23	600
0.63	0.38	Export and Industry Bank Inc.	0.38	0.38	0.38	0.38	3,000,000
75.5	47.5	Metropolitan Bank and Trust Co.	52	53	52	52	1,822,200
65.5	39	Philippine National Bank	42.5	43	42.5	42.5	164,500
68	46	Philippine Savings Bank	61	61	60.5	60.5	2,000
39.57	20	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	23	23.5	23	23.5	502,000
90	61	Security Bank Corp.	68	68	68	68	259,400
66	42	Union Bank of the Philippines	43	43.5	43	43.5	20,200
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
2.22	0.6	Bankard Inc.	1.9	1.96	1.9	1.96	373,000
16.25	4.6	CitisecOnline.com Inc.	11	11	10.75	11	141,400
5.9	4.8	I-Remit Inc.	5.2	5.5	5.1	5.4	38,973,000
1,970.00	1,580.00	Manulife Financial Corp.	1,670.00	1,670.00	1,670.00	1,670.00	500
5	2.7	National Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils.	2.8	2.9	2.75	2.85	22,513,000
1,390.00	260	The Philippine Stock Exchange Inc.	1,105.00	1,105.00	1,100.00	1,100.00	3,600
2,500.00	1,970.00	Sun Life Financial Inc.	2,215.00	2,215.00	2,215.00	2,215.00	150
1.94	1.3	iVantage Corp.	1.46	1.46	1.46	1.46	50,000
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
6.2	3.8	Aboitiz Power Corp.	4.8	4.85	4.8	4.85	4,562,000
70.5	49	First Gen Corp.	58	60.5	58	60.5	272,900
92	51	First Phil. Holdings Corp.	61.5	61.5	58.5	60	1,100,900
17.5	8.8	Manila Water Co. Inc.	16.25	16.25	15.75	16	6,347,100
105.45	27.73	Manila Electric Co.	70	70.5	69.5	70	1,109,400
7.8	4.1	PNOC Energy Development Corp.	6.9	7	6.7	7	27,177,000
7.4	3.95	Petron Corp.	5.7	5.8	5.6	5.7	3,978,000
14.75	6.4	Phoenix Petroleum Philippines Inc.	6.4	7	6.4	7	33,000
2.04	0.91	Trans-Asia Oil and Energy Dev't Corp.	1.3	1.34	1.26	1.34	1,989,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
6.3	3.4	Alaska Milk Corp.	4.95	4.95	4.95	4.95	7,000
2.32	1.48	Alliance Tuna International Inc.	1.56	1.58	1.48	1.5	1,906,000
28.5	19.5	Ginebra San Miguel Inc.	22	22	22	22	305,500
61	39	Jollibee Foods Corp.	48	48	47	47	22,500
0.98	0.5	RFM Corp.	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	930,000
3.3	2.06	Roxas Holdings	2.65	2.7	2.65	2.65	652,000
80	42.5	San Miguel Corp. "A"	44	44.5	42.5	42.5	68,200
88	43	San Miguel Corp. "B"	45.5	45.5	43	44	699,000
20.75	13.5	Universal Robina Corp.	13.75	14	13.75	14	2,518,800
0.55	0.24	Vitarich Corp.	0.3	0.33	0.24	0.33	550,000
		CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
9.2	4.95	Holcim Philippines Inc.	8	8	8	8	1,760,000
2	0.81	Southeast Asia Cement Holdings Inc.	0.96	0.96	0.95	0.95	1,810,000
23	1	TKC Steel Corp.	10	10.25	9.5	10	75,613,600
		CHEMICALS					
6.3	3.75	Chemrez Technologies Inc.	4	4.1	4	4.1	62,000
1.46	0.51	Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.85	0.85	0.85	0.85	50,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
0.75	0.17	Picop Resources Inc.	0.35	0.36	0.35	0.36	530,000
9	7.3	Splash Corp.	7.5	7.7	7.3	7.4	439,000
		HOLDING FIRMS					
39	18.75	ABS-CBN Holdings Corp.-PDR	34	34	34	34	37,000
3.9	2.7	A. Soriano Corp.	3.25	3.3	3.25	3.3	193,000
0.185	0.0525	AJO.net Holdings Inc.	0.115	0.12	0.11	0.12	58,930,000
1.28	0.29	APC Group Inc.	0.57	0.58	0.57	0.58	480,000
3.65	1.5	ATN Holdings Inc. "A"	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.7	131,000
0.018	0.0075	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. "A"	0.0095	0.01	0.0095	0.01	104,000,000
0.019	0.0075	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. "B"	0.011	0.011	0.011	0.011	2,000,000
9.7	5.8	Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc.	6.6	6.7	6.6	6.7	359,000
0.021	0.009	Alcorn Gold Resources Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	36,000,000
7.3	3.5	Alliance Global Group Inc.	5.2	5.3	5.2	5.3	9,864,000
1.38	0.57	Alsons Consolidated Resources Inc.	0.84	0.84	0.84	0.84	40,000
2.9	0.89	Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp.	2.4	2.42	2.38	2.42	1,369,000
645	397.92	Ayala Corp.	560	560	545	555	174,570
5.8	1.64	Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.75	3.8	3.6	3.65	7,941,000
12	4.95	DMCI Holdings Inc.	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	421,700
3.55	1.76	House of Investments Inc.	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	200,000
14.5	8.4	JG Summit Holdings Inc.	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	4,574,500
5.9	0.61	Jolliville Holdings Corp.	1.78	1.78	1.74	1.76	34,000
3.15	1.42	Lodestar Investment Hldgs Corp.	3.15	3.15	3.15	3.15	15,592,000
0.8	0.23	MEDCO Holdings Inc.	0.41	0.41	0.4	0.4	200,000
11.5	1.5	Minerales Industrias Corp.	6.2	6.3	6	6.1	2,331,000
8.5	3	PAL Holdings Inc.	5.6	5.6	5.3	5.4	32,000
0.28	0.016	Pacifica Inc. "A"	0.23	0.23	0.21	0.215	161,880,000
452.5	268.53	SM Investments Corp.	327.5	332.5	327.5	330	232,270
0.73	0.14	Sinophil Corp.	0.33	0.34	0.33	0.33	4,800,000
0.75	0.1	Wellex Industries Inc.	0.27	0.28	0.27	0.28	1,260,000
		PROPERTY					
8.9	5	Anchor Land Holdings Inc	7.2	7.4	7.2	7.4	25,000
1.06	0.4	Araneta Properties Inc.	0.63	0.63	0.63	0.63	10,000
19.25	11.88	Ayala Land Inc.	15.75	16	15.75	16	22,759,500
1.88	1	Belle Corp.	1.16	1.18	1.16	1.18	2,213,000
4.7	3	Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	4,000
3.83	2	City and Land Developers Inc.	2	2	2	2	2,000
0.86	0.39	Crown Equities Inc.	0.57	0.58	0.57	0.58	410,000
0.99	0.52	Empire East Land Holdings Inc.	0.73	0.74	0.72	0.74	450,000
6.9	1.08	Eton Properties Philippines Inc.	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.8	70,000
0.47	0.0575	Ever Gotesco Resources and Hold'gs Inc.	0.22	0.225	0.22	0.225	12,670,000
1.48	0.61	Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.93	0.96	0.93	0.95	3,520,000
2.44	1.28	Filinvest Land Inc.	1.54	1.58	1.52	1.54	8,527,000
2.9	1.18	Keppel Philippines Properties Inc.	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5	120,000
4.6	1.86	Megaworld Corp.	3.85	3.85	3.8	3.8	16,079,000
6.4	1.5	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.	4.2	4.2	3.95	4	143,000
5.2	2.2	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.-Warrants	2.9	2.9	2.8	2.85	271,000
10.7	0.125	Phil. Estates Corp.	0.28	0.31	0.28	0.31	360,000
0.87	0.32	Philippine Realty and Holdings Corp.	0.43	0.43	0.43	0.43	220,000
9.2	1.32	Polar Property Holdings Corp.	3.75	3.75	3.75	3.75	60,000
23	14.5	Robinson Land Corp.	17.5	17.75	17.5	17.5	3,077,800
5.9	1.93	SM Development Corp.	4.05	4.05	3.9	3.95	336,000
13.5	7.6	SM Prime Holdings Inc.	11	11.5	11	11.5	7,805,800
3.25	1.5	Shang Properties Inc.	2.2	2.2	2.14	2.2	317,000
4.5	0.38	Sta. Lucia Land Inc.	2.04	2.04	1.9	2	239,000
1.34	0.46	Suntrust Home Developers Inc.	0.51	0.51	0.51	0.51	40,000
0.49	0.09	Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.24	0.24	0.24	0.24	500,000
7.5	3.65	Vista Land and Lifescapes Inc	4.75	4.9	4.75	4.9	17,139,000
		MEDIA					
38.5	18.75	ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	31.5	33	31.5	33	108,800
12	7.6	GMA Holdings Inc.	7.8	7.8	7.6	7.7	3,613,000
11.75	7.6	GMA Network Inc	7.7	7.7	7.6	7.7	92,000
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
2.12	1.1	Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc.	1.28	1.28	1.28	1.28	445,000
1,750.00	1,180.00	Globe Telecom Inc.	1,405.00	1,425.00	1,405.00	1,420.00	57,530
3,285.00	2,250.00	Phil. Long Distance Telephone Co.	3,005.00	3,010.00	3,005.00	3,010.00	38,400
8.1	5.5	Pilipino Telephone Corp.	6.9	7	6.9	7	841,000
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
0.39	0.17	Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.19	0.19	0.19	0.19	2,690,000
15.25	2.1	Diversified Financial Network Inc.	14.75	14.75	14.25	14.5	1,745,000
11.5	2.5	IPVG Corp.	7.5	7.8	7.5	7.8	217,000
0.065	0.027	ISM Communications Corp.	0.037	0.038	0.037	0.038	8,300,000
29.5	8.5	Imperial Resources Inc. "A"	15	15	15	15	7,200
5	1.62	Information Capital Tech. Ventures Inc.	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	17,000
0.32	0.05	Island Information and Technology Inc.	0.175	0.18	0.175	0.18	1,010,000
2.08	1.1	Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.36	1.38	1.3	1.38	627,000
0.0725	0.03	Philweb Corp.	0.048	0.049	0.047	0.048	9,000,000
5.8	1.64	Transpacific Broadband Group Int'l Inc.	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.65	669,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
2.14	1.14	Aboitiz Transport System Corp.	1.36	1.36	1.32	1.32	363,000
42.5	18.75	Int'l Container Terminal Services Inc.	38.5	39.5	38.5	39	4,720,400
2.04	1.06	Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	40,000
		HOTEL & LEISURE					
16.5	5	Acesite (Phils.) Hotel Corp.	9	9	9	9	2,792,000
4.25	1.8	Leisure and Resorts World Corp.	2.22	2.48	2.22	2.48	199,000
6	2.16	Manila Jockey Club Inc.	4.5	4.5	4.5	4.5	20,000
1.16	0.32	Premiere Entertainment Productions Inc.	1.06	1.08	1.02	1.04	8,534,000
1.2	0.54	Waterfront Philippines Inc.	0.81	0.82	0.81	0.82	3,120,000
		EDUCATION					
3.7	2.6	iPeople Inc	3.1	3.1	3.1	3.1	16,000
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
6	2.04	Macroasia Corp.	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75	1,000
17.25	9.8	Pacific Online Systems Corp.	11.5	11.75	11.5	11.5	866,000
30	6.4	Paxys Inc.	6.4	7.1	6.4	7	576,000
450	390	eTelecare Global Solutions Inc	410	450	400	420	167,090
		MINING					
0.017	0.0085	Abra Mining and Industrial Corp.	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	56,000,000
6.9	3.6	Apex Mining Co. Inc. "A"	5.5	6	5.5	6	988,000
7	3.85	Apex Mining Co. Inc. "B"	5.9	6.3	5.9	6.3	1,136,000
21.25	7.8	Atlas Cons. Mining and Dev't Corp.	12.75	13	12.75	13	384,800
14.25	8.9	Benguet Corp. "A"	11.5	11.5	11.5	11.5	28,500
12.75	1.96	Dizon Copper Silver Mines Inc.	9	9	8.5	8.6	139,000
3.1	0.6	Geograce Resources Philippines Inc.	1.86	1.86	1.68	1.76	73,138,000
0.56	0.18	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. "A"	0.44	0.47	0.43	0.47	98,500,000
0.61	0.22	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. "B"	0.47	0.51	0.47	0.51	40,310,000
0.038	0.017	Manila Mining Corp. "A"	0.026	0.027	0.026	0.027	286,500,000
0.041	0.02	Manila Mining Corp. "B"	0.029	0.03	0.029	0.03	220,400,000
30	2.12	NIHAO Minerals Resources Int'l Inc.	19	19	18	19	1,307,300
0.021	0.0088	Omico Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.012	0.013	23,900,000
0.015	0.007	Omico Corp.-Warrants	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	2,000,000
11.25	3.5	Philex Mining Corp.	9.5	9.7	9.3	9.7	4,450,000
49	14.75	Semirara Mining Corp.	41	41	41	41	1,000
1.36	0.5	United Paragon Mining Corp.	0.69	0.72	0.69	0.72	110,000
1.8	0.72	Vulcan Industrial and Mining Corp.	1.08	1.14	1.08	1.12	2,915,000
		OIL					
0.58	0.25	Basic Energy Corp.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	100,000
0.029	0.01	Oriental Pet. & Minerals Corp. "A"	0.023	0.023	0.023	0.023	77,800,000
0.03	0.01	Oriental Pet. & Minerals Corp. "B"	0.024	0.025	0.024	0.025	33,500,000
13.75	9	Petroenergy Resources Corp.	9.8	9.8	9.8	9.8	32,000
0.032	0.0095	The Philodrill Corp.	0.026	0.026	0.025	0.026	99,100,000

AVERAGES			VOLUME	VALUE
Financial	847.28 UP	3.09	70,512,330	575,246,600.00
Industrial	4,009.21 DOWN	13.93	134,492,900	1,347,584,370.00
Holding Firms	1,980.40 DOWN	8.10	413,039,040	420,997,405.00
Property	1,595.02 UP	17.97	97,097,100	670,510,620.00
Service	1,783.12 UP	9.21	47,262,420	543,480,300.00
Mining & Oil	8,103.20 UP	213.91	1,020,739,600	302,482,465.00
All Shares Index	2,127.71 UP	5.94		
PSEI	3,494.44 UP	15.50		
		GRAND TOTALS	1,783,143,390	3,860,301,780.00

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SOURCE: TECHNISTOCK, PSE

IPPs ask gov't to free Napocor of fuel role

By Abigail L. Ho

THE PHILIPPINE INDEPENDENT POWER Producers Association (Pippa) is calling on the Department of Energy, or the Joint Congressional Power Commission, to free the National Power Corp. from responsibility of buying fuel for generation facilities operated by IPPs.

Pippa president Ernesto Pantangco said it would be better for the plant operators themselves to purchase oil or fuel for their facilities, as this would give them a better handle on their risks.

A Pippa position paper submitted to the House committee on energy said allowing Napocor to continue getting fuel for IPP-controlled plants was "counter-productive" and would likely bring down privatization proceeds due the government.

The paper also said that limiting the responsibilities of the yet-to-be-assigned IPP administrators to just marketing the energy output under Napocor's IPP contracts would undermine the value of such contracts.

The mandate of RA 9136, or the Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001, was to fully privatize Napocor, Pippa said.

"The bidders to the IPP administrator privatization would consider the carving out of the fuel procurement function in favor of Napocor as a diminution in the value of the IPP contract. The winning bidder would assume a significantly higher risk in selling the energy output when it has no control over the fuel used for such output as compared to when all aspects of the Napocor contract is assumed by it. Higher risk translates to lower privatization value," the group said.

The position paper added that the government, in this case Napocor, should veer away from activities that could be carried out efficiently by the private sector, "if only to avert accusations of having unjustifiable interest in such activities."

Militant group Bagong Alyansang Makabayan recently filed a case with the Office of the Ombudsman, over Napocor's alleged irregularities in procuring coal for IPP-operated plants.

P88.4B in capital raised . . .

From page B10

Holdings Inc., i-Remit Inc. and Splash Corp.

As of November, the total stock rights offerings—or the sale of stocks to existing or new shareholders based on a ratio of the shares they own—spiked 603 percent to P16.03 billion from P2.28 billion as of end-2006. The companies that issued stock rights this year were Megaworld Corp. (P10.8 billion), EEI Corp. (P540 million), Alliance Global Group (P3.3 billion), Unionbank (P265.5 million), Geograce Resources Phils. Inc. (P560 million), ISM Communications Corp. (P300 million) and Omico Corp. (P262 million).

In the meantime, the amount raised this year through private placements amounted to P5.53 billion, slightly lower than the P6.18 billion recorded for 2006.

Companies that were involved in private placements this year were Philweb Corp., Basic Petroleum Corp., ATR Kim Eng Financial Corp., Atlas Consolidated Mining & Development Corp., Philippine Bank of Communication, TKC Steel, Music Corp., IPVG Corp. and Lodestar Investment Holdings Corp.

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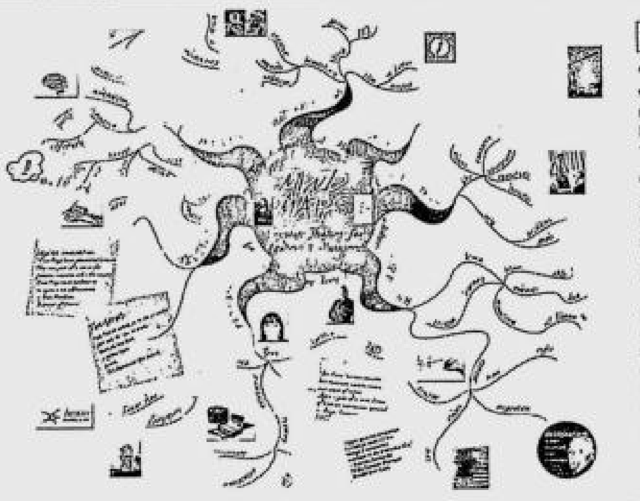

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Agnes "Aggie" Sarthou, Ph.D.
Facilitator
Dr. Sarthou brings with her a wealth of corporate training experience on disciplines of management, organization visioning, strategic planning as well as skills on leadership, communications, people handling and values. Dr. Sarthou was recently trained in Creativity and Mind Mapping by Buzan Asia in Singapore. In this two day program, Dr. Sarthou enables participants to manage their workload, plan high impact presentations and solve the toughest of business dilemmas through Mind Maps.

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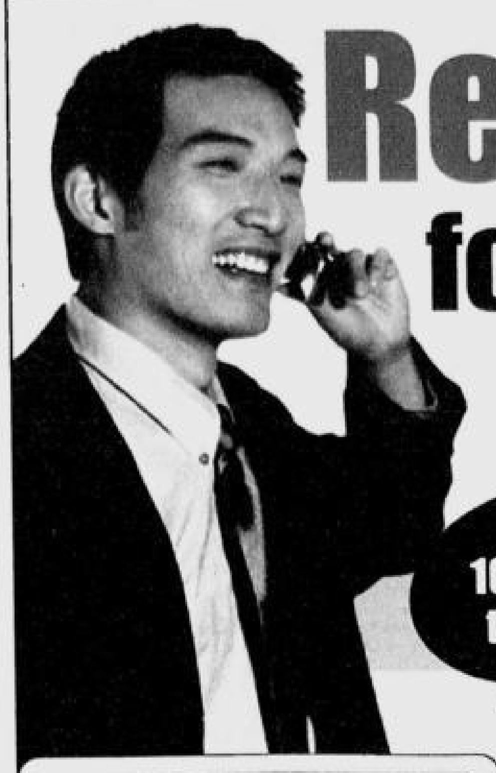

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When it comes to you and your family's future, you don't leave anything to chance. And there's nothing like being BETTER prepared today, so you win over life's unforeseen obstacles tomorrow. That's why, this is the best time to reload for the future with Insular Life's Money Back Reloaded.

1 P 1 Million Life Insurance Protection
Gives you as much as P1,000,000 cash benefits from death due to natural causes during the twenty-year protection period.

2 P 1 Million Accidental Death Benefit
Doubles your coverage in case of accidental death. Your beneficiaries can get as much as P2,000,000 in cash!

3 P 1 Million Hospitalization Benefit
Get as much as P2,000 as daily cash allowance for your hospital stay. Benefits start on the first day of confinement whether due to accident or sickness.

4 Get More Than Double Your Money... 255%* guaranteed!
You get more than double your money at the end of the 20-year protection period. That's all the premiums you have paid plus interest or a total of 255%* of your investment... guaranteed! However, any hospitalization claims made during the policy period will be deducted from your guaranteed cash benefits.

*For annual mode of payment

Choose the Money Back Reloaded that suits you:

GUARANTEED CASH BENEFITS*			HOSPITALIZATION	
Plan	18-47	48-55	Plan	Hospitalization Benefits
100	210,885	217,260	100	P200/day
200	269,280	315,180	200	P400/day
300	403,920	472,770	300	P600/day
400	538,560	630,360	400	P800/day
500	673,200	787,950	500	P1,000/day
1000	1,346,400	1,575,900	1000	P2,000/day

*The guaranteed cash benefits specified above can only be given to you at the end of the 20-year protection period. However, any hospitalization claims made during the policy period will be deducted from your guaranteed cash benefits.

AMOUNT OF PREMIUMS

Plan	MONTHLY 18-47	MONTHLY 48-55	ANNUAL 18-47	ANNUAL 48-55
100	806.00	831.00	8,270.00	8,520.00
200	1,030.00	1,206.00	10,560.00	12,360.00
300	1,545.00	1,809.00	15,840.00	18,540.00
400	2,060.00	2,412.00	21,120.00	24,720.00
500	2,575.00	3,015.00	26,400.00	30,900.00
1000	5,150.00	6,030.00	52,800.00	61,800.00

Save as much as 20% by paying in less frequent modes. Please call or write us for the rates of the quarterly and semi-annual payment modes. You may also apply for Plan 600 to Plan 2000.

Reload for the Future! Apply today! Here's how:
1. Fill out the application COMPLETELY & ACCURATELY. Please bring valid IDs or send copies of valid IDs together with your application form.
2. Sign and send your application via:
MONEY BACK RELOADED
THE INSULAR LIFE ASSURANCE CO., LTD.
P.O. BOX 1256 MCPO 0725 MAKATI CITY
30-MINUTE EXPRESS PROCESSING TIME
3. Simply drop by our store at Insular Life Direct 5/F Insular Life Bldg., 6781 Ayala Ave., Makati City and get your policy in 30 minutes.

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Dec. 6, 2007

For more information, call Insular Life DIRECT!
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You may photocopy the MONEY BACK RELOADED Application Form if you need additional copies for other interested applicants.

INSULAR LIFE
Money Back RELOADED APPLICATION FORM

☑ YES! I want my 4-in-1 protection!
Send me my Insular Life Money Back Reloaded. I understand that the policy will be in force when I have made my first premium payment.

ABOUT THE APPLICANT / OWNER / PAYOR (PLEASE WRITE IN PRINT)
FIRST MIDDLE LAST
Name:
Home Address:
Postal Code:
Home Tel. / Fax No.:
Civil Status:
Date of Birth (mm/dd/yy): / /
Age:
Place of Birth:
Gender: ☐ Male ☐ Female
Occupation:
Monthly Income:
Company:
Business Address:
Postal Code:
TIN #:
SSS #:
Office Tel. / Fax No. :
e-mail Address:

Send my insurance documents to my:
☐ Business Address ☐ Home Address

I want the coverage of:
☐ PLAN 100 ☐ PLAN 200 ☐ PLAN 400 ☐ PLAN 500
☐ PLAN 800 ☐ PLAN 1000 ☐ Others ______

I prefer to pay:
☐ Monthly ☐ Quarterly ☐ Semi-annually ☐ Annually

In case of premium default, I elect (check one only):
☐ Cash Surrender Value ☐ Extended Term Insurance
☐ Automatic Payment of Premium

In the absence of such an election and should the premium due continue to be in default until the end of the grace period provided in the Policy, this Policy shall automatically continue in force as non-participating Extended Term Insurance.

Policy Dividend Option (check one only):
☐ Paid in Cash ☐ Used to reduce premiums
☐ Left with the company to earn interest

If none is chosen, "Left with company to earn interest" shall be applied. • If "Left with the company to earn interest" is elected or applied, I hereby authorize the Company to apply policy dividends, together with the available cash values, for payment of the premiums under any of the Premium Default Options in effect and/or policy loan interest. It is understood that I also have the option to withdraw any available accumulated dividends left on deposit with the Company. • Policy dividends, if any, shall be determined exclusively by the Company. Policy dividends are not guaranteed as they vary depending on certain factors such as the Company's mortality experience, investment returns, taxes and expenses. As such, the Company does not guarantee that policy dividends shall be sufficient to pay for any future premiums.

Insurance benefits are to be paid to:
FIRST MIDDLE LAST
Beneficiary/ies:
Relationship to the Insured:
Date of Birth (mm/dd/yy): / / Age:
The default beneficiary designation is Primary Revocable unless specified otherwise.

1. During the past 5 years, have you consulted a physician for medical attention or surgical advice, or been confined in a hospital, sanitarium or similar institution? ☐ YES ☐ NO
2. Have you ever been told you had: cancer, diabetes, epilepsy, heart trouble, high blood pressure or tuberculosis, kidney disorder, nervous disorder or HIV-AIDS? (If YES, underline which ailment.) ☐ YES ☐ NO
3. Are you now in good health? ☐ YES ☐ NO
4. What is your HEIGHT? __________ ft., WEIGHT? __________ lbs.

Important: If you answered "YES" to any of the questions above, please give full details. Include doctor's name and address, hospital, nature, date and result of consultation, ailment or impairment. Use separate sheet if necessary.

I understand that this insurance is issued based on the above statements, which I represent are true and complete to the best of my knowledge and belief. I authorize any physician, hospital, clinic or other medically-related facility to furnish The INSULAR LIFE Assurance Company, Ltd. with any information concerning my medical history and physical condition. I understand that the policy will not be in force until I have made the first premium payment.

✓
APPLICANT / OWNER / INSURED (Printed Name and Signature)

Date

DECLARATION ON THE PROPOSED REPLACEMENT OF EXISTING POLICY(IES)
*For the APPLICANT-OWNER to answer
1. Total Life Insurance in Force on Proposed Insured
Company Basic/Cover Accident Rider/Year of Issue
2. Has there been or will there be any change in any existing insurance in force? ☐ Yes ☐ No
3. Will premiums for the insurance applied for be paid by a policy loan from any existing policy? ☐ Yes ☐ No

IMPORTANT : If yes, please furnish details (name of company, policy number, and amount of insurance being replaced).

REMINDER: It is usually disadvantageous to REPLACE existing life insurance policy(ies) with a new one. Some disadvantages are. • You may not be insurable on standard terms. • You may have to pay a higher premium in view of higher age. • You may lose financial benefits accumulated over the years.

Please note that in your own interest, we would advise that you consult your present insurer before making a final decision. Hear from both sides and make a careful comparison. You can then be sure that you are making a decision that is in your best interest.

✓
APPLICANT / OWNER / INSURED (Printed Name and Signature)

AMC0.MBR01.NA.0102

INSULAR LIFE

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Regional Field Unit VI, Iloilo City
Tel. Nos. 3378812 Fax: 3364219

ITB No. 2007-19
Procurement of Soil Ameliorant
DA-RFU VI, Iloilo City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Agriculture, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project : Procurement of 56,703 packets Soil Ameliorant (Potassium humate 55-60% WSP or WSG @ 100 gms./packet)
Location : DA-RFU VI, Iloilo City
Approved Budget For the Contract : Six Million Eight Hundred Four Thousand Three Hundred Sixty Pesos P 6,804,360.00
Source of Fund : GMA-Rice
Brief Description : **56,703 packets Soil Ameliorant (Potassium humate 55-60% WSP or WSG @ 100 gms./packet)**

For contracts involving delivery of goods:

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	Nov. 23 to December 17, 2007, 9:30 AM DA RFU VI
2. Pre-bid Conference	December 5, 2007, 10:00 a.m., ORD Conference Room
3. Deadline for Submission and Receipt of Eligibility Requirements and Bid Documents	December 17, 2007, 10:00 a.m., ORD Conference Room
4. Opening of Bids	December 17, 2007, 10:00 a.m., ORD Conference Room

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of non-refundable amount of One Thousand Pesos (P1,000.00) to the Department of Agriculture Cashier.

The Department of Agriculture assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

The Department of Agriculture reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Approved by:
(Sgd.) DR. PETER S. SOBREVEGA
BAC Chairman

(PDI--Nov. 26, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Regional Field Unit VI, Iloilo City
Tel. Nos. 3378812 Fax: 3364219

ITB No. 2007-18
Procurement of Organic Fertilizer
DA-RFU VI, Iloilo City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Agriculture, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites licensed manufacturer – distributor of Organic Fertilizer for Rice with capacity to supply the required quantity within the inclusive period of delivery to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project : Procurement of 54,790 bags Organic Fertilizer for Rice at 50 kg. per bag (NPK content not less than 7%, MC not more than 35%, OM content – not less than 20%)
Location : DA-RFU VI, Iloilo City
Approved Budget For the Contract : Ten Million Four Hundred Ten Thousand One Hundred Pesos P 10,410,100.00
Source of Fund : GMA-Rice
Brief Description : **54,790 bags Organic Fertilizer for Rice at 50 kgs. per bag (NPK content not less than 7%, MC not more than 35%, OM content - not less than 20%)**

For contracts involving delivery of goods:

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	Nov. 23 to December 17, 2007, 9:30 AM DA RFU VI
2. Pre-bid Conference	December 5, 2007, 10:00 a.m., ORD Conference Room
3. Deadline for Submission and Receipt of Eligibility Requirements and Bid Documents	December 17, 2007, 10:00 a.m., ORD Conference Room
4. Opening of Bids	December 17, 2007, 10:00 a.m., ORD Conference Room

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of non-refundable amount of One Thousand Pesos (P1,000.00) to the Department of Agriculture Cashier.

The Department of Agriculture assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

The Department of Agriculture reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Approved by:
(Sgd.) DR. PETER S. SOBREVEGA
BAC Chairman

(PDI--Nov. 26, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Regional Field Unit VI, Iloilo City
Tel. Nos. 3378812 Fax: 3364219

ITB No. 2007-20
Procurement of Bio-N
DA-RFU VI, Iloilo City

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Department of Agriculture, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors/contractors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project : Procurement of 49,424 bags Microbial Innoculant Bio-N @ 200 gms/packet
Location : DA-RFU VI, Iloilo City
Approved Budget For the Contract : Two Million Nine Hundred Sixty Five Thousand Four Hundred Forty Pesos P 2,965,440.00
Source of Fund : GMA-Rice
Brief Description : **49,424 bags Microbial Innoculant Bio-N @ 200 gms/packet**

For contracts involving delivery of goods:

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two (2) years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed, as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	Nov. 23 to December 17, 2007, 9:30 AM DA RFU VI
2. Pre-bid Conference	December 5, 2007, 10:00 a.m., ORD Conference Room
3. Deadline for Submission and Receipt of Eligibility Requirements and Bid Documents	December 17, 2007, 10:00 a.m., ORD Conference Room
4. Opening of Bids	December 17, 2007, 10:00 a.m., ORD Conference Room

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of non-refundable amount of One Thousand Pesos (P1,000.00) to the Department of Agriculture Cashier.

The Department of Agriculture assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

The Department of Agriculture reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process and to reject all Bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidder or Bidders.

Approved by:
(Sgd.) DR. PETER S. SOBREVEGA
BAC Chairman

(PDI--Nov. 26, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
PHILIPPINE HEALTH INSURANCE CORPORATION
PhilHealth Regional Office III
PhilHealth Bldg., Lazatin Blvd., San Agustin, City of San Fernando
Healthline (045) 963-7148 www.philhealth.gov.ph

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID
ITB No. III-07-008

PhilHealth Regional Office III (PRO III), through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites all duly registered suppliers to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of Project : Procurement of Generator for PRO III
Location : PhilHealth Bldg. Lazatin Blvd., City of San Fernando
Brief Description : Diesel Generator with a 250 KVA Capacity
Approved Budget for the Contract : Php 2,000,000.00
Delivery Period : Within 90 days after issuance of Notice to Proceed

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last two years with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bid Conference, Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification, and Award of Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is as follows:

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	November 16 to 29, 2007
2. Pre-Bid Conference	November 29, 2007 at 1:30 PM
3. Opening of Bids	December 13, 2007 at 1:30 PM
4. Bid Evaluation	In accordance with the provisions of RA 9184
5. Post-Qualification	
6. Notice of Award	

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Php 2,000.00 to the Cashier of PRO III.

(Sgd.) PRISCILLA G. ASUNCION
Chairperson, PRO III Bids and Awards Committee

(PDI–November 20 & 26, 2007)

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Leadership styles for success

DR. VICKY BELO, ONE OF THE leaders in the field of cosmetic surgery and beauty enhancement will share her secrets in success during the 531st General Membership Meeting of the People Management Association of the Philippines (PMAP) on November 28, 2007 at the Hotel Intercontinental, Makati City.

The general meeting, which will also highlight the 51st Annual Elections of the association shall play host to a productive learning experience to all attendees on the various aspects of leadership for success. Mr. Henry Tenedero, President of the Center for Learning and Teaching Styles co-speaks.

PMAP, in its 51st year, continues to be the premier organization of human resource management practitioners and now also people managers in the country. Interested parties may call PMAP at tel. nos. 726-1581/1588/1532 or email pmap@pmap.org.ph.

PMAP holds 51st annual elections

THE PEOPLE MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION of the Philippines (PMAP) will be holding its 51st Annual Elections on Wednesday, November 28, 2007, at the Hotel Intercontinental, Makati City.

Coinciding with the elections is the PMAP 531st General Membership Meeting with guest speakers Dr. Vicky Belo and Mr. Henry Tenedero to speak on different leadership styles for success.

Now in its 51st year, PMAP continues to be the leader in the field of human resource and people management in the country. Interested parties may contact PMAP at Tel. nos. 726-1581/1588/1532 or email pmap@pmap.org.ph.

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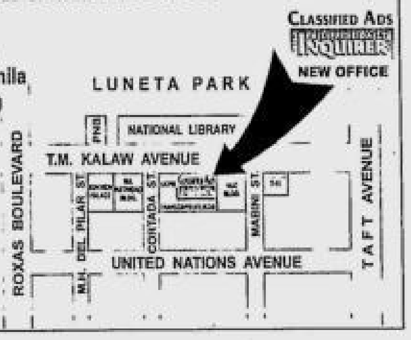

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OBITUARIES

"I am the resurrection and the Life, He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies, and whoever believes in Me will never die."
— John 11:25-26

Julieta Soria Seapno-Reyes

"Manay"

July 30, 1941 – November 22, 2007

Her children, **Julius "Jong"**, **Jennifer "Pinky"**, **Jasmin**; son-in-law **Vic**; grandchildren **Juliana** and **Josh**; sister **Agustina**; brothers **Dodong** and **Warlie**; nieces **S. Mari Murillo, FMM** and **S. Maryann Soria, SLME** request prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Loyola Memorial Chapel, Guadalupe, Makati City.

Interment will be on Wednesday, November 28, 2007 at 2:00 p.m. at the Heritage Park, Global City, Taguig, after the Mass at the Loyola Memorial Chapel, Makati City.

"I will instruct you and show you the way you shall walk, I will counsel you, keeping an eye on you." ***Psalm 32:8***

JOSE R. RAVALO

September 19, 1922 – November 23, 2007

Former Assistant Regional Director, Region V
Department of Education

has lived a full life and now peacefully rests in the infinite mercy and grace of our Lord.

His bereaved and loving wife, **Concordia Rigoroso Ravalo** and his children, **Elinor (†)** and **Ramon Lawenko**, **Marietta** and **Cicero Triunfante**, **Renato** and **Erlinda Ravalo**, **Sonia** and **Leonardo Serrano Jr.**, **Glenn** and **Emily Ravalo**, **Dr. Alvin** and **Maribel Ravalo**, and **Rebecca Ravalo** together with his siblings **Jesus (†)**, **Magdalena (†)**, **Bienvenido (†)**, **Hipolito (†)**, **Cesar**, **Antonio (†)**, **Beda** and **Jesus**, nephews and nieces, grandchildren and great-grandchildren, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Funeraria Oro, Rizal Street, Legazpi City.

Interment shall be on Friday, November 30, 2007 at the Forest Lake Gardens, Legazpi City after the 8:00 a.m. Mass at the Our Lady of the Gate Parish, Daraga, Albay.

"I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life. No one comes to the Father but through me." John 14:6

Death Notice

DR. MANOLITO SYJUECO GOZON

September 18, 1936 - November 16, 2007

His remains lie in state at the Gozon Ancestral Home, 726 Rizal Avenue, Tañong, Malabon City.

Interment will be on November 28, 2007, Wednesday at Tugatog Cemetery, Malabon City after the 1:00 pm Funeral Mass concelebrated by Bishops, Diocesan and Religious Clergy at the San Bartolome Parish.

—oOo—

DR. JAIME ERNESTO B. BASA

March 6, 1960 - Nov. 12, 2007

His body lies at Chapel Gumamela, 3F Sanctuarium, Araneta Ave., Quezon City. Viewing is on Nov. 23 to 26. There will be an 8 p.m Mass on Nov. 23; 7:30 p.m. on Nov. 24; and 5 p.m. on Nov. 25.

Interment will be on Nov. 27, 2007 at Himlayang Pilipino, Tandang Sora, Quezon City.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

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❶ Copy of Death Certificate
❷ Any identification document (I.D.)

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Bank leads microfinance effort for small traders

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

CORPORATE CITIZEN

THE BANK OF THE PHILIPPINE ISlands has grown to become the country's third largest banking and financial institution largely due to its long term and productive relationships with top corporations, small and medium scale enterprises and high net worth individuals.

But while BPI continues to find ways to keep and strengthen its hold on traditional, lucrative markets, it has not left the small borrowers behind, especially rural cooperatives and nongovernment organizations.

BPI Foundation, the social development arm of the bank, started the ball rolling in 1989 when it launched a program in aid of NGOs and cooperatives called the Financing Assistance Line.

Loans paid back on time

Over P56 million has been lent to NGOs under the FAL facility, and the money has benefited 41 cooperatives and about 2,000 microenterprises. The foundation does not have any problems getting its money back for practically all borrowers settle their loans on time.

Realizing the power of microfinance to help alleviate poverty in the countryside, BPI took over the microfinance lending operations of the foundation and set up in 2005 a separate microfinance unit under the corporate banking division.

"[The microfinance unit] is the best manifestation of our commitment to corporate social responsibility, having mainstreamed microfinance into the core business of the bank," said Josaias T. dela Cruz, BPI vice president for microfinance. "And we intend to expand it."

Its main line is the wholesale institutional loan that used to finance the working capital requirements of microfinance institutions that have demonstrated at least a three-year track record in microfinance.

Microfinance leader

BPI is already the leader in microfinance among private commercial banks, with over P450 million in ready credit for microfinance lending to rural and thrift banks, cooperatives, NGOs and people's organizations.

Microfinance lending represents just a small part of BPI's loan portfolio. But the Ayala-controlled bank remains bullish about its prospects, which is why the bank expects to increase its microfinance lending facility to at least P600 million.

"Microfinance is proven in terms of poverty alleviation, and the microfinance institutions that have been lending over the past two decades have come up to scale and are now able to access more funds from the commercial banks," Dela Cruz said. "Many of them are poised to expand their own operations."

BPI, through BPI Foundation, is helping these institutions do just that by providing them with developmental capacity-building loans, which are earmarked for training and computerizing operations.

This is to enable them to improve their services to the micro borrowers who come to them for help.

Partnerships

BPI has also partnered with the Ateneo Development Studies Program to help upgrade the skills and services of the partner institutions.

Dela Cruz said that, under the partnership, Ateneo provides the training while BPI takes care of part of the logistics and marketing.

The training is held every month and the learning series has gone to Manila, Cebu, Davao, Albay and Zamboanga.

"Every month, Ateneo runs a microfinance course under various topics, such as governance and product development," Dela Cruz said. "The most popular so far is on portfolio delinquency."

In addition, BPI has forged partnerships with local and international development-oriented organizations that provide guarantees and technical help to MFIs. These include Grameen Foundation USA and CordAid of the Netherlands.

$3.5 million in guarantees

BPI is also in talks with other foreign commercial banks and international organizations to provide an additional $3.5 million in guarantees to Philippine MFIs.

It is hoped that, by improving the finances and strengthening the capabilities and skills of microfinance institutions, more Filipinos will have access to badly needed capital with which to operate a business.

So far, the BPI microfinance program has reached over 144,000 retail borrowers and indirectly benefited 720,000 Filipinos.

"Ultimately, the goal for BPI is to be the leader in enhancing the access of MFIs throughout the country to financing, microfinance training, and business solutions, and thus expand the reach of microfinance to majority of Filipinos who would benefit from it," the bank said in a statement.

THE BANK of the Philippines, through BPI Foundation, gets experts to help improve the skills of partner organizations involved in microfinance.

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As bad loans are cleaned up ...

From page B1

tion, such as discounted payoff settlement, refinancing programs based on capacity to pay or voluntary surrender (dacion en pago) for those no longer interested in the mortgaged property," the letter said.

Repossessed

Maravilla said he was taken aback by the demand letter.

"How could they repossess my house when I am current with all my payments?" he said in an interview. "Our employer withholds the monthly payments and remits it to NHMFC."

Maravilla added that, before being informed of the transfer, a representative of BFS visited his house unannounced to conduct an ocular inspection of the property without giving him an inkling of the impending transaction.

"We were surprised by all this," he said in Filipino.

Unfortunately, Maravilla's sad plight with BFS is, by no means, unique.

In recent years, close to P100 billion worth of supposedly "bad loans" have been sold off by banks and financial institutions to so-called "vulture funds" (an industry term) like BFS whose main goal is to make a profit from either reviving delinquent loans or making money by selling off foreclosed properties.

Alarming proportions

To be exact, data from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) show that some P97 billion worth of bad assets have been sold off under the first incarnation of the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) Act of 2002, meant to unburden banks of their massive bad loan portfolios that had reached alarming proportions.

Another P32 billion worth of loans have also been moved to shell companies pending better market conditions that would allow their buyers to profit from the bad loans.

In an interview, BSP Deputy Governor Nestor Espenilla said as much as P100 billion more in bad loans would likely be sold to SPVs under the auspices of the revised SPV Law.

In general, this is good news for regulators who have tried unsuccessfully for years to coax banks into lending more to the credit market to spur economic activity.

Easing the strain

Before the SPV Law, the banking system held almost P500 billion worth of unproductive assets, leaving them with little cash to lend to housing loan borrowers.

"By and large, the SPV scheme has been successful in easing the strain on the financial system," Espenilla said.

But for small borrowers like Maravilla, their problems may be just beginning.

According to him, he had an outstanding balance of P167,000 with the NHFMC before his obligation was sold to BFS.

"When I approached BFS for clarification, they gave me the runaround and told me that I now owed them P184,000," he said. "After paying faithfully for almost eight years, how could that happen?" *(To be concluded)*

'07 inflation ...

From page B1

Also, pressures from rising oil prices were tempered by the peso's substantial rise against the US dollar since the start of the year.

The sharp appreciation of the peso, Asia's best performing currency this year, has tempered the spike in local gasoline prices by about P2 from January to October, based on a BSP report recently presented to Malacañang.

The average savings for both diesel and unleaded gasoline were based on the peso's rise in terms of weighted average in the first 10 months.

The BSP report presented quantifiable evidence on how the peso's strength helped the country withstand the inflationary impact of soaring global oil prices.

Because of the benign inflation outlook through next year, the BSP was able to reduce its interest rates thrice this year, hitting record lows.

Some analysts believe that the central bank is in a position to further cut key rates next year.

At present, the BSP's overnight borrowing rate is at 5.5 percent, and its lending rate at 7.5 percent—the lowest rates since the independent central bank was created in 1993.

The BSP has reduced each rate by 25 basis points over the last two months.

Also, the BSP may again decide to ease its key policy rates because of the slowdown in the growth of broad money supply, which fell below the 20 percent threshold set by monetary authorities in support of inflation targets.

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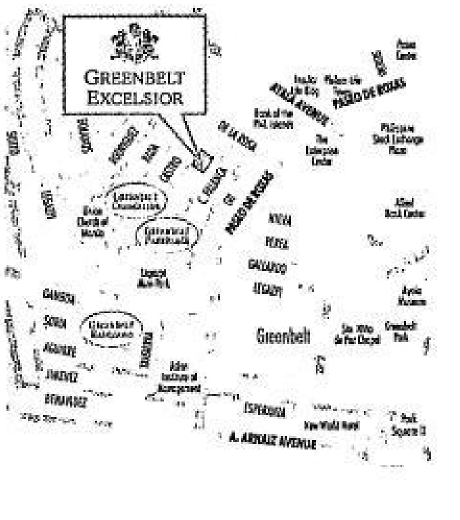
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PRESIDENT Macapagal-Arroyo congratulates Zest-O chair Alfredo Yao for winning the Asean Business Award for Innovation, first time for the Philippines to win this category.

From plastic wrappers to Asean's most admired firm

By Ronnel W. Domingo

ALFREDO M. YAO STARTED HIS business career with printing cellophane wrappers for food products. But a visit to a trade exhibit in Germany in 1979 changed his path.

Yao, the chair of Zest-O Corp., recently adjudged a Most Admired Asean Enterprise during the inaugural Asean Business Awards, was introduced to the then new technology in packaging called the "doy pack," in Germany.

Most consumers these days take doy pack which consumers take for granted as one of the standards in packaging beverages and other food products. But at that time, it was the first time that the airtight foil containers were used.

Yao saw the potential in doy packs and invested in a machine.

Unfortunately, juice manufacturers back home did not buy the idea.

Left with a seemingly useless equipment, Yao decided to produce his own homemade juice products which were formulated literally in his own kitchen.

A year later, Zest-O was launched with what was then an unusual packaging that caught the public's interest. Sales were boosted with the Filipino consumers' collective colonial memory, as many then thought the drink was imported. The introductory price however was lower than the other drinks contained in tetra bricks.

Launched in 1980, Zest-O's annual sales have grown to reach P2.6 billion in 2004 with a total asset of P450 million.

Today, there are a total of 12 different Zest-O flavors which include fruit sodas, purees, and kitchen condiments. Zest-O also produces popular products like One Tea, Sunglo juice drink, Big 250 juice drink, and latest acquisition Plus! juice drinks, which allows it to claim an 80-percent share of the ready-to-drink juices market.

The company also exports mango puree to China, Australia, New Zealand, Korea, Singapore, the United States and Europe. It also produces canned sodas with flavors ranging from root beer to cola as well as the popular fruit sodas where it made its mark.

From the original 20 employees working in a small corner of Yao's original company, Zest-O now employs over 3,000 workers in various offices and facilities nationwide.

The popularity of Zest-O fruit drinks has even penetrated the fashion industry. Handbags made of recycled Zest-O packs are exported to many countries.

The award-winning packaging that drink manufacturers initially rejected has become a symbol of the Filipino's ingenuity.

In a phone interview, Zest-O chair Alfredo M. Yao said the award was not only a recognition conferred to his firm but to all Filipinos whom he described as a "very innovative people."

"Zest-O was just a bridge, a tool for the international community to appreciate our excellence as a nation," Yao told Business Inquirer.

He added that the award represented 47 years of hard work and gave Zest-O more confidence in pursuing further growth.

"I realize that responsibility comes with the award, and this should not only encourage me to do better but rather for me to be a man for others," Yao said. "(We will strive for Zest-O to) serve as an inspiration to the many other Philippine and Asean businessmen to emulate."

According to the Asean Business Advisory Council which sponsored the awards to mark the 40th anniversary of the regional bloc, Zest-O bested two rivals in the innovation category for its investment in research and development to add value to its product and acquire new approaches and product services.

The awards, which also cited outstanding Southeast Asian firms in the categories of growth, employment and corporate social responsibility, were given out last week during the closing ceremony of the 5th Asean Business & Investment Summit in Singapore.

"The awards are tribute to, and recognition of the most outstanding homegrown companies," said Low Sin Leng, chair of the awards body. "These companies serve as shining role models for other enterprises in Asean."

The other three awardees were Singapore Telecommunications Ltd. for growth; CapitalLand Ltd. (also of Singapore) for employment category; and Indonesia's PT Kalbe Farma for CSR.

"They embody the very vigor and spirit of Asean businesses and our entrepreneurs, as well as the immense potential of the region to compete and prosper going forward," she added.

Also, Abac chair Robert Yap said he was very optimistic the awards will encourage enterprises to continuously pursue new and creative ways of elevating their brand names, as Asean rapidly pushes forward in its integration into the global economy.

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BILL Shepherd, business development manager for Asia Pacific of the Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI) of California, discusses updates and direction of ESRI technology and the launching of ArcGIS 9.3 during the 2007 Philippine ESRI GIS User Conference.

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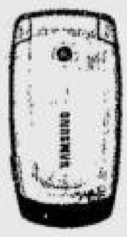

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Quo vadis, young CPA?

MAPping THE FUTURE
Joey A. Bermudez

THREE DECADES AGO, I WAS in your seat in this same venue anxiously waiting to take my oath while the guest speaker rambled through his "rags to riches" life story. To be fair, his story had many interesting twists but inspiration was the least of my needs at that time. My thoughts were of the uncertain future that lay ahead and I was very pre-occupied with the fear that I might not land a good job. It did not help that I was starting off with some bragging rights earned by hurdling the treacherous CPA exam.

What is the CPA title worth? As a badge of affirmation, it gives you front door access into the complex world of business. It puts you in the express lane. It makes the first few steps a lot easier. It gives you that proverbial "twice to beat" advantage. But you can't expect it to do much more for you the moment you get past the door. Inside is either a bed of roses or a snake's pit, depending on what glasses you wear.

I am not here to regale you with a heart-rending tale of how I struggled against poverty as a young boy. There is enough of that stuff in the evening soaps on television. Even my children who are about your age have grown tired of these poor boy stories. At dinner, whenever I would talk about how difficult it was in my time, they would turn nonchalant and dismissively quiet. I know that in their minds, they are quietly saying, "Yeah, right."

Let us instead get real by talking about the cold, impersonal world of business, the same world that you have plunged into. If you're not careful, you might get a glimpse of what you are up against. "Forewarned is forearmed" so they say. It is better to go to war with a good idea of the terrain and a clear picture of your enemy. Here is some unsolicited advice.

Advice no. 1: Learn to deal with an uneven playing field.

Have you heard of the saying, "Some are more equal than others?" The harsh truth is that we all enter the business world with varying weaponry. Some are more armed than others. We fight with what we have. Instead of complaining about lack of bullets, it is far more productive to pick one's targets and fire high-quality shots. Let me give you an actual example from my own experience. In my first few years as a banker, I worked as an account officer selling the deposit products of the bank. I made cold calls, knocked at doors, introduced myself and tried to convince people to deposit money with my bank. It was a tough job for me but it didn't seem tough in the beginning for my colleagues who were wealthy, well-connected and had the right surnames. They would simply call up their "titas" and "titos" who had money flowing out of their ears and voila, they would meet their quotas! It was pretty much like this during our first six months together. By the seventh month, their party was over. The family wealth was no longer enough to fill the ever-increasing sales quotas. It was time for honest-to-goodness selling. Suddenly, the scale had tipped in favor of those who had the humility and the thick face to knock at doors of non-relatives.

Don't get me wrong. It is not a sin to be wealthy. If excellent pedigree gives you competitive advantage, well and good. Just remember that while wealth and connections can put you ahead in round one, you will eventually need to settle down and pound the pavement like the rest if you want to protect your head start. If you are not wealthy and well-connected, don't lose heart. Make up for your handicap with "old-fashioned" perseverance. Try your best to stay within striking distance in round one and seize the momentum when your handicap has disappeared. Believe me, the "old boys' club" is no match against those who diligently do their homework and execute their plans with deadly consistency.

The playing field is never even. In fact, is if often lopsided because external influences have a unique way of influencing business decisions. I need not even talk about fraternities, religious affiliations, geographic origins, and, believe it or not, gender preferences.

Advice no. 2: There are no right and wrong occupations.

You need to choose the occupation that suits your core competence and your personal inclinations. Because this occupation is what your heart desires and what your mind and body does best, it will make you happy and you will create so much value in this world. Economists call this your "comparative advantage." If you deviate from your comparative advantage, you will end up so miserable in your old age thinking about all the fun that you missed.

If you feel that you are in your elements inside the classroom, by all means teach. If you believe that entrepreneurial risk and reward is what drives your adrenalin, go into business. If employment is your calling, take a job and do it well.

There is no pecking order when it comes to job significance. It is not true that being employed makes you contribute less to society and to the economy than being an entrepreneur. Mother Teresa and Mahatma Gandhi were not entrepreneurs but did more to enhance humanity than many of those who get written about in Fortune and Forbes. Your contribution to society and to the economy is the sum total of all the good that you have created less all the damage that you have inflicted. You may have created hundreds of thousands of jobs as an industrialist but if you have in the process deprived this government of the right taxes, bled your suppliers dry, shortchanged your customers, and underpaid your workers, you cannot even begin to compare yourself with an office worker who diligently goes to work, gives his employer a fair shake, performs his best, and lives within his modest means. One's real worth is calculated no differently from the traditional accounting definition of net worth: Assets minus liabilities.

An occupation should not define you. You should define it. The passion, the creative thinking, and the hard work that you put into an occupation will define it. Remember that boxing was a brutal sport until Muhammad Ali re-defined it into a graceful dance. Golf was a lazy game for old men until Tiger Woods made it an exact science. Revolutions were bloody until Filipinos made it a picnic. Politics was a noble profession until some people made it entertainment.

Whatever occupation you get into, be not afraid to re-invent yourself. For many years, the accounting profession struggled to remake itself after waking up to the fact that the world had changed and that our long-held notions of fair reporting had to keep up with the evolving business realities. One does not need to be thrust into a life-threatening situation before re-inventing himself; he only needs to be excited by the new role that he will assume. The best financial controller who worked for me was not even a CPA. He was not even an accountant by profession. He was an engineer. But he totally transformed himself into a financial controller because he saw in that role a lot of thrills and joys that many who went to accounting school could not see.

Advice no. 3: Preserve your brand and your intrinsic quality, no matter what.

Your brand is not what you say about yourself but what your intrinsic quality exudes. There are many companies who talk incessantly about service quality even if your real-life encounters with them are enough to make your blood boil. Many politicians are notorious because they often preach things that they don't do. In other words, they live a double life like schizophrenics. Before you even start acquitting the non-politicians, think twice. Moral decay is as alive in the corporate world as it is in public service. Yet some companies would make themselves out as guardians of societal good by tooting their horns noisily about their philanthropic and "social responsibility" programs. When juxtaposed with the way they commoditize labor, the way they creatively weave out of legitimate tax obligations, and the way they "out-and-out" frustrate the market through their anti-competitive behavior, all that breast-beating falls flat on its face.

Many individuals that inhabit both the corporate world and the entrepreneurial arena have been infected by the propaganda fever, the struggle to put up a cute face because of their failure to preserve their fundamental goodness. If you want to find them, read the stories of the great global giants whose CEOs were educated in Ivy League schools, moved around in respected social circles and sat in the boards of well-known charitable foundations, yet undid themselves by committing the most sordid corporate fraud and malpractice. This tidal wave of human folly in what has given rise to the tsunami of governance reform sweeping the world today. But my fearless forecast is that all these governance reforms will fail unless we focus on the true source of flawed governance: a flawed character.

At the end of the day, the only sustainable competitive advantage is good character. It allows you to stay in the race because people do not write you off nor deprive you the benefit of the doubt no matter how many times you have lost in the past. Yes, it has many short-term costs, not the least of which is the disadvantage one suffers against players who have no qualms about playing dirty, who are not morally convicted at all when they lie, cheat and steal. In my own career, I have been tempted many times to stray and give these dirty rivals a dose of their own medicine. After all, my friends would always tell me, "nice men finish last." Fortunately, circumstances have intervened in a strange way, preventing me from dishing out my own version of Machiavellianism. On hindsight, I now know that people need not be saved by circumstances if only they had the courage to keep their intrinsic goodness, and thus, their brand.

That, ladies and gentlemen of the accounting profession, is my unsolicited advice. If I made sense, allow me to leave this hall with my limbs intact. If I did not, I can forgive the absence of applause, the nonchalant pose and the dismissive silence. I would know then that in your minds, you are sending me home with that all too familiar "Yeah, right!"

(Speech delivered by the author during the oath-taking of the new CPAs sponsored by Board of Accountancy, Professional Regulation Commission and Picpa at the PICC on Nov. 20, 2007. The author is chair of the MAP committee on corporate social responsibility and president and CEO of Chinatrust (Phils.) Commercial Bank Corp.. Feedback at mapsec@globenet.com.ph)

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Walking *the* talk

RAJENDRA PANGKREKAR

THE FIRST THING THAT IS evident about Rajendra Pangkrekar, president and country manager of Ericsson Philippines, is his sense of clarity—a clear vision of the goal and an equally assured approach to getting there. His is a confidence buoyed by a strong team that has produced sterling results. More essentially, it is the product of an unstinting adherence to Ericsson's core values, which have served as invaluable guideposts.

"Management philosophies come and go—but it is our core values that have ensured that Ericsson has thrived and survived," he says. Effective leadership styles, which in turn empower and energize staff are natural products of such core values, he adds.

Elaborating on his personal beliefs on leadership, Raj lists three main characteristics of a good leader.

"A good leader should be thoroughly respectful of his environment," he begins. "A leader should also be open-minded, flexible and adaptable. And last but not least, he should be able to rally a whole organization behind a common cause."

For Raj, galvanizing an entire organization is an achievable feat once one identifies a clear goal and remains consistent with his decision making and execution.

"For us, the goal is to ensure business growth and a stable organizational environment, which each and every employee is proud to be part of," he elaborates. Among the essential tools to achieving this was a combination of clearly communicated goals and a strong leadership persona. Citing Mahatma Gandhi as among the world's leaders that he most admires, he says: "Gandhi had a clear vision of achieving independence for India by using non-violence means. Additionally, his physical imagery of simplicity was a strong symbol of his ideals." It is extremely important for all involved to have a feeling of pride and identify themselves with a worthwhile cause.

"Everyone is equally important—maybe not important all of the time, it differs according to the circumstances—but everyone is a link in the same chain," he stresses.

Raj adds that Ericsson Philippines' employee fora encourage staff to share their thoughts openly and engage in collective and collaborative thinking. There is also the unique mid-year review where all staff spend one and a half days "locked up (not literally) in a room" to address critical issues, an initiative that encourages self-empowerment among staff.

Ultimately though it is up to leaders in the company to set a good example, he affirms.

"You have to walk the talk," he says, adding that one must firstly exude a passion for their work. This includes taking an interest in one's staff.

"I walk the floors—I make sure I know everyone in the organization, if not by name, by face," he says. "I have an open-door policy where anyone can come in and talk about anything under the sun."

He has also instituted a healthy, and in today's world of electronic communications, somewhat unconventional office etiquette.

"I insist people to pick up the phone instead of writing e-mails to 'cover' themselves," he says. "When someone writes me an e-mail, sitting within the building, I ask to see them and ask them to tell me the contents of their e-mail over the phone or in person. Because of that, the staff has started to trust each other's words more. We have enough reports to generate lots of electronic communication."

But, as Raj says, talk is cheap—it's the results of management strategies that count. And in this regard, the Philippines hasn't done too poorly at all. It has been one of the fastest growing and most profitable markets in Southeast Asia for Ericsson in the last two years.

So what keeps this energetic president going? True to form, it is a simple and powerful reward that drives Raj, much like what underlies his strategies as a leader: "What keeps me passionate about my work is watching how it changes people's lives in a positive way," he says.

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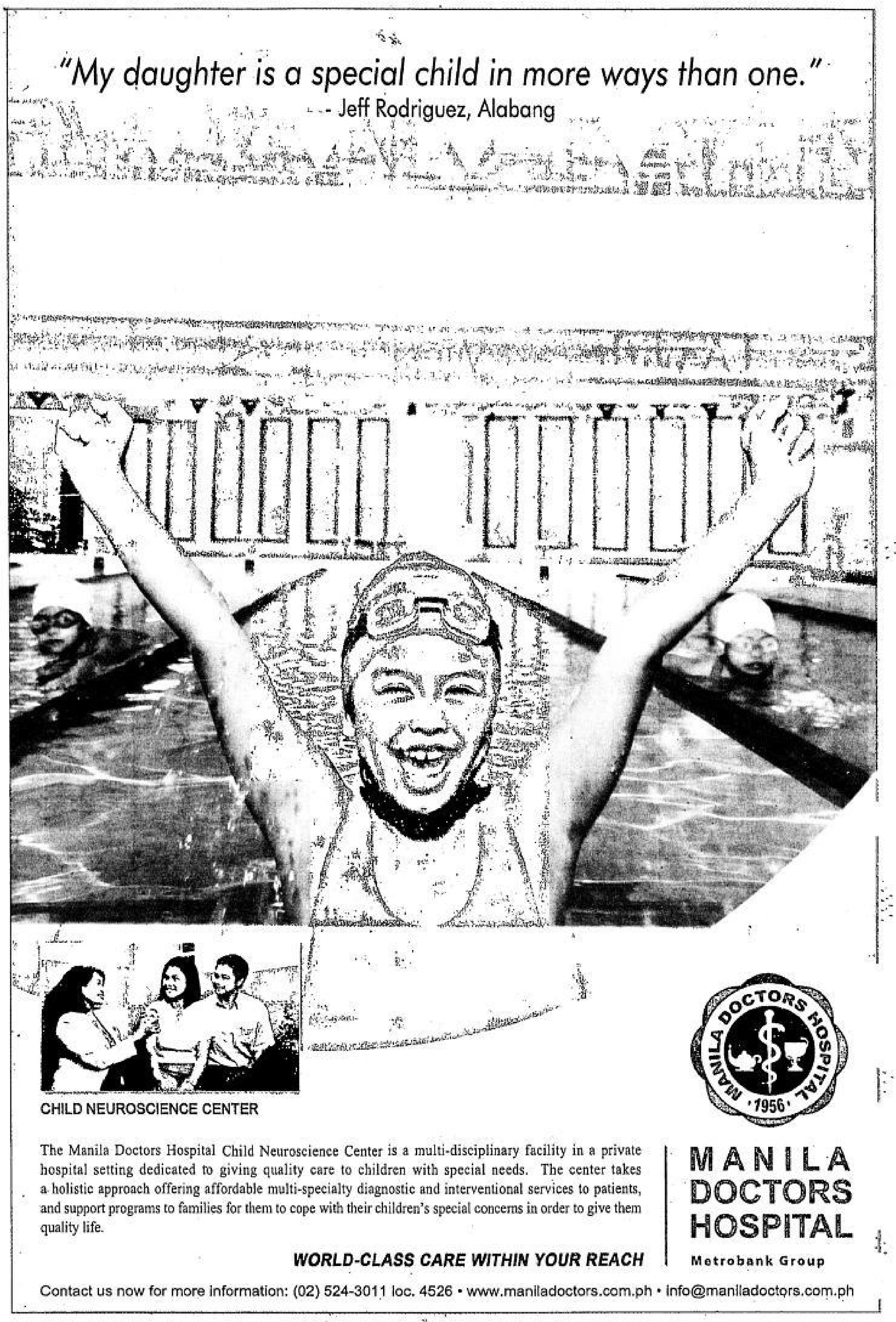

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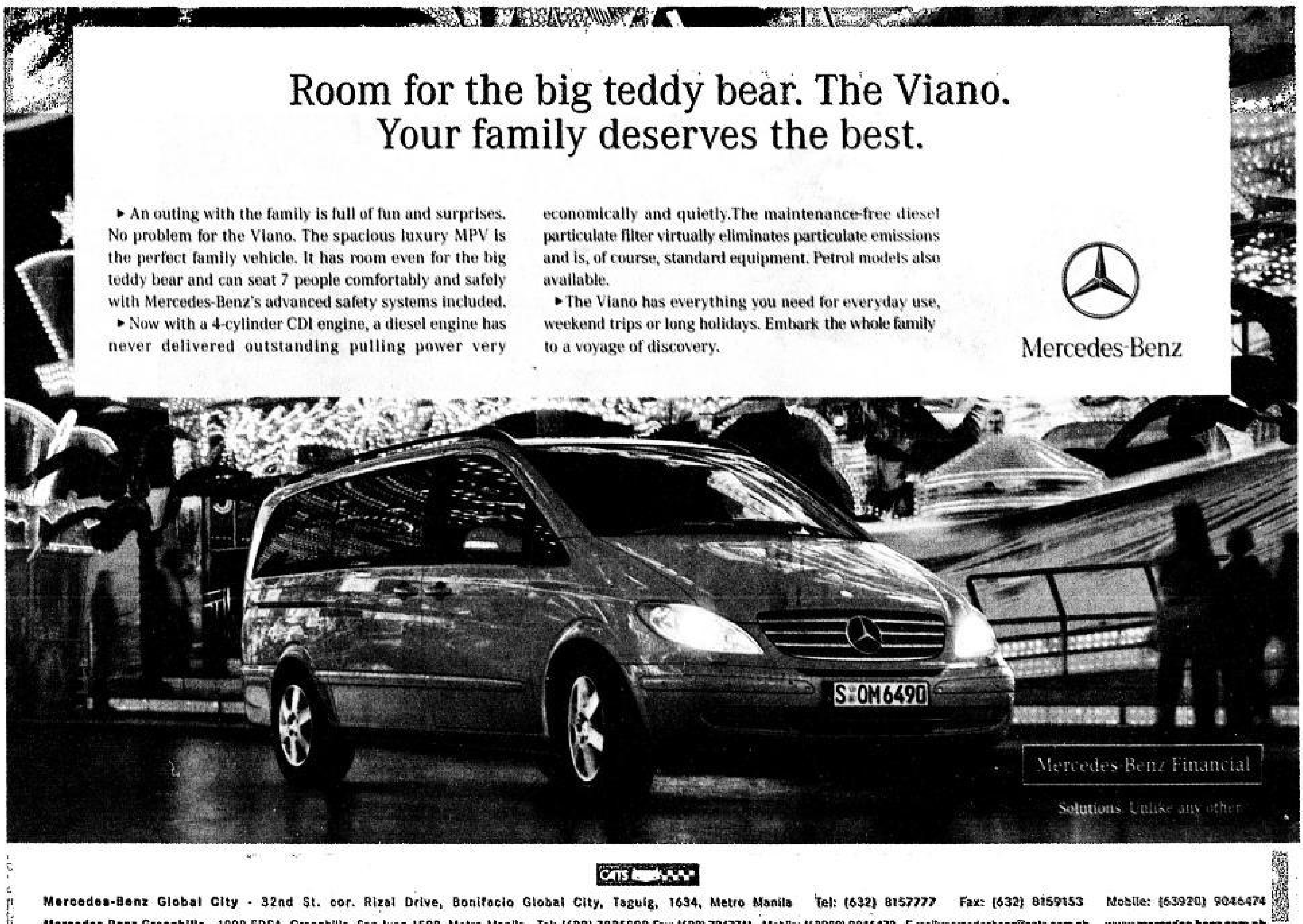

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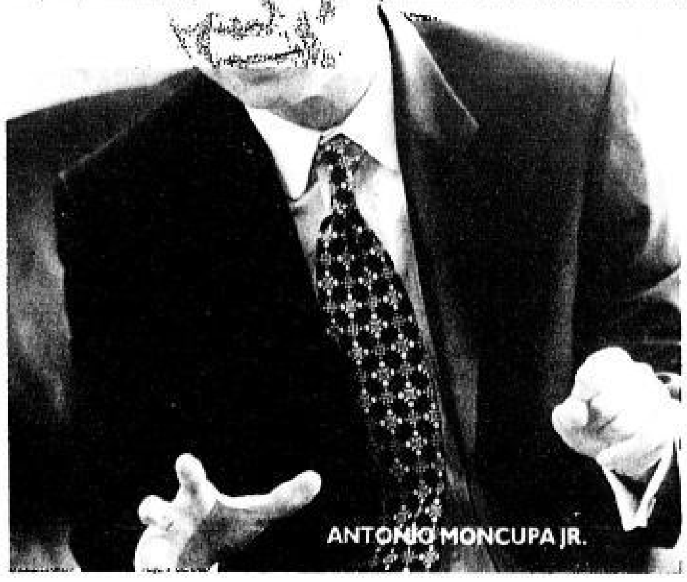
What this bank intends to do in the *next* five years

Q and A with East West Bank's new president

ANTONIO MONCUPA JR., former executive vice president and chief finance officer of International Exchange Bank (which was acquired by Union Bank of the Philippines in 2006), was appointed president of East West Banking Corp. on Sept. 16, 2006.


ANTONIO MONCUPA JR.

One of his first acts when he took over the helm was to translate the board's broad agenda into a five-year strategic growth plan for East West Bank. This interview provides an insight into that plan.

What is the five-year strategic plan all about?

For the past two years, the bank has been reviewing the best way to attain its desired scale and efficiency levels. The result is a decision for the bank to choose its market segments instead of being a bank for all. The bank must concentrate its resources and avoid diffusing its energies to compete effectively. We have also decided that customer service will be our value proposition. We have crafted a new vision and strategy statement to articulate this decision: "A world-class bank anchored on service excellence in its chosen markets." This new vision statement embodies the seeds of our new strategy, which is to focus and differentiate. We will focus on well-defined market segments and differentiate through excellent customer service.

What will be the bank's chosen market segments?

The money is really in business. We have identified the corporate middle markets and individuals in the upper segments—or those in the A, B and upper C—as our primary target for our liability or deposit business. On the asset side, we will cater to corporate middle markets and select consumer segments. With these market segments, it follows that the bank will be moving toward cash management, corporate loans, trade finance, consumer lending, and fixed income distribution business.

What about your differentiation strategy?

We strive to put a meaning to customer service. Big companies tend to lose touch with their customers and begin to see them as just numbers on a page. Yet there is no accounting formula that will tell just how important is keeping your customers happy. We are determined to get customer service down to a science.

How do you do that?

This is about attitude, skills, and infrastructure. Slogans and clichés won't work. Everything must be consistent. The most senior people must lead and live what customer service is all about. We will undergo the same training, follow the same script and procedures as everybody else. While we could put all these in a box, we know that in the end, our attitude will radiate to our customers. This is one thing we will be rigid about.

We need to develop a customer-centric culture. This requires sales and service processes that spell out the things we should do—from account prospecting to account maintenance—down to the scripts, the timing. We gather everyone and exchange ideas in a contact sales clinic and ask: "How did you get this account? What was your experience like? What was the customer's reaction?" Then we give them training on handling customer complaints. You have to go out and meet prospective clients. Some people will succeed, some will not. So you ask what made them succeed, what made them fail, then you get them together and talk about it so people learn.

If the customer comes back, you succeeded; if not, there must be something wrong.

How do you know if the strategy is paying off so far?

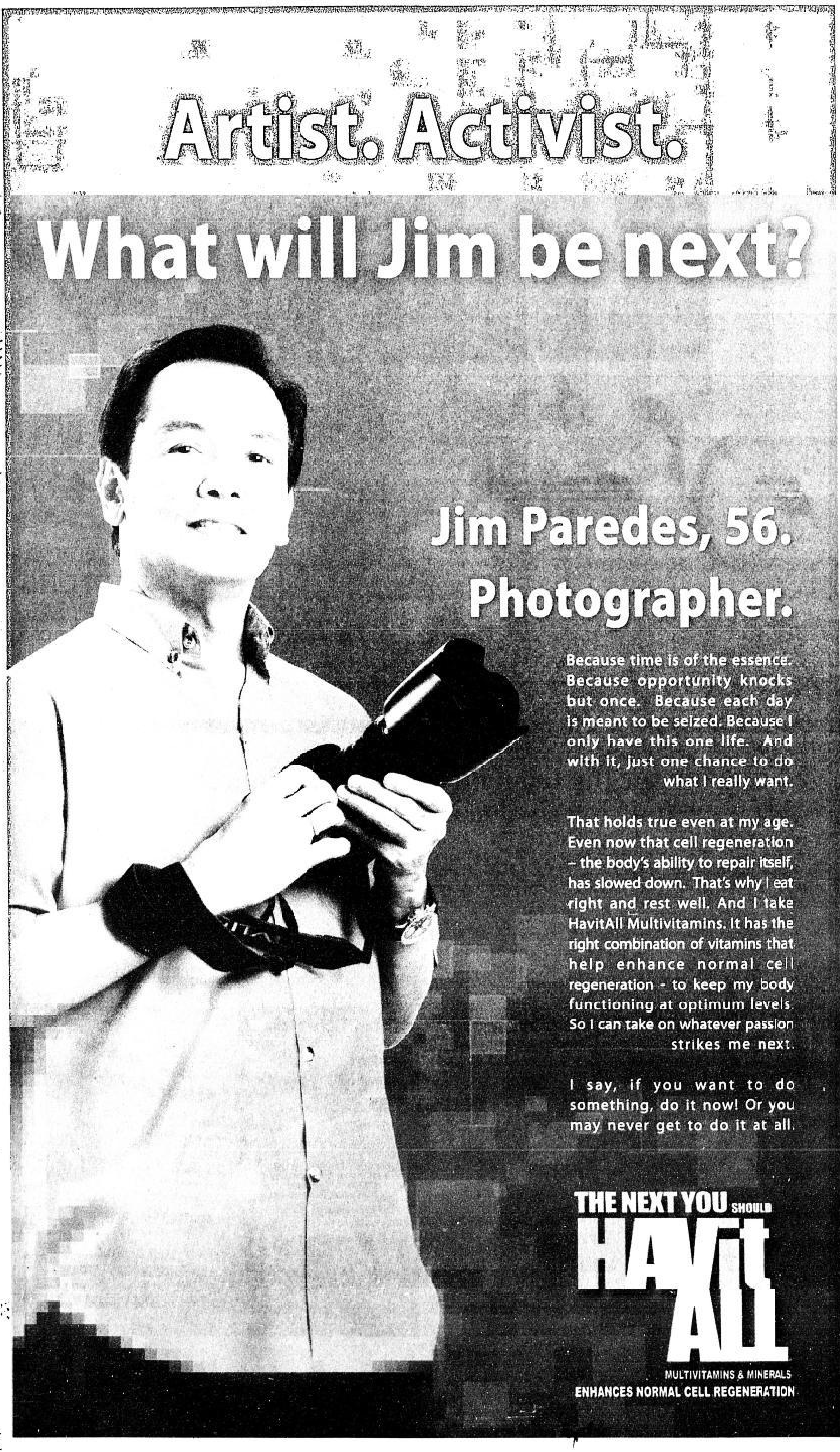
The only articulate affirmation of whether or not we are on the right track are the results. We are discovering latent capabilities that were just waiting to be tapped. For instance, in a lot of ways, the new guys who manned our new branches have raised the bar of performance. Our people saw that the vision we set out to do is possible and that they could do it. The result? In the last nine months, the bank has already grown by about a third—something our people have not heard of in the past. Our CASA levels doubled and have grown by more than 40 percent in the first half of 2007.

We were able to reduce our deposit costs significantly while increasing deposits. We expect to increase our net interest income by around P450 million this year.

Does size still matter?

There's no other way (but to be big). There is a critical mass you need to gain efficiency. In this business, you have to have around P75 billion to P100 billion for you to get a return of 18 percent to 20 percent. Whether you are a P25-billion or a P100-billion bank, there will only be one president, one head of treasury, one head of branches, one HR head, one head of accounting ... So if you could spread the cost of this overhead on a wider base, on a per peso basis, it will come out smaller.

You also need a certain critical mass to reach your customers. You need about 100 to 120 branches and be in key areas.



Artist. Activist.
What will Jim be next?
Jim Paredes, 56.
Photographer.

Because time is of the essence. Because opportunity knocks but once. Because each day is meant to be seized. Because I only have this one life. And with it, just one chance to do what I really want.

That holds true even at my age. Even now that cell regeneration – the body's ability to repair itself, has slowed down. That's why I eat right and rest well. And I take HavitAll Multivitamins. It has the right combination of vitamins that help enhance normal cell regeneration - to keep my body functioning at optimum levels. So I can take on whatever passion strikes me next.

I say, if you want to do something, do it now! Or you may never get to do it at all.

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Pinoy kids wield ₱37-B spending power

Study shows influence of digital technology

By Daxim L. Lucas

CARTOON NETWORK THIS WEEK unveiled the results of its latest study on Filipino children and their lifestyles revealing how they now enjoy greater access to digital technologies and play in the consumer and environmental space.

According to the New Generations Philippines 2007 survey, the so-called tweenies—kids seven to 14 years old are true "digital natives," consuming media for entertainment and social networking, and are in the know about trends and issues—including computer and video games, and concern for global warming.

"Young people have the inherent ability to assimilate new technology and adapt to change at a phenomenal rate, and Filipino kids are no exception, especially in the way they choose to communicate with one another," said Duncan Morris who is the vice president for research and market development of Turner International Asia Pacific Ltd.

"Whether through text or instant messaging, e-mail or via homepages, kids are readily embracing these channels of communication and socialization as they become more accessible, and are making them their own," he added.

The results showed that Internet usage has become much more widespread since the survey was last conducted in 2005, with 46 percent of kids now using the Internet versus just a 26 percent in the last edition. Of these Internet users, 43 percent send or receive e-mail at least weekly, and 35 percent used instant messenger over the same time frame.

They have also been quick to embrace so-called Web 2.0 applications such as video (72 percent of Internet users aged seven to 14 have watched videos online) and multi-player games (68 percent).

At the same time, the survey revealed that social networking is increasingly becoming a part of children's lives, with 76 percent of Internet users having created their own homepage and networks of friends online. Another 31 percent of total kids said that they have made a friend over the Internet whom they have never met in real life.

Kids of all ages are also coming to rely on text-based communication, as one third of kids aged seven to 14, and 52 percent of teens aged 13 to 14 agree with the statement: "Without e-mail, instant messaging or texting, it would be difficult to stay in touch with my friends."

More importantly, however, the survey showed that growth in access to digital technologies has done nothing to diminish the importance of television in kids' lives. With 96 percent of respondents having viewed TV "yesterday," TV is the only medium consumed universally by kids on a daily basis, and standing above all other media. Radio is the next most widely consumed media with 30 percent of kids having listened "yesterday").

According to the survey, Filipino kids' combined pocket and gift money scaled up to the 3.7 million kids population in represented areas translates into as much as P37 billion in annual spending power. There is no shortage of opportunities to spend this money, as 99 percent of parents said that they visit shopping malls with their kids, and 27 percent said they did this weekly.

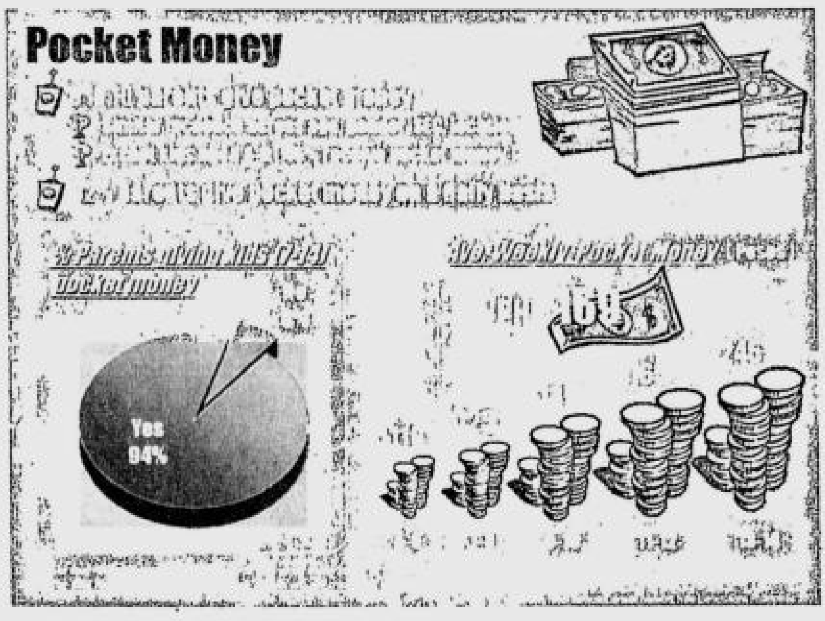
Despite their fascination with the latest crazes and trends, the survey revealed that kids are aware of the larger picture as demonstrated when asked about environmental issues. Three-quarters of parents and two-thirds of kids agreed with the statement "global warming is something that concerns me."

The vast majority of parents and kids have also indicated an openness to doing something about it, with 95 percent of kids affirming that they "prefer parents to buy environmentally friendly products," and 80 percent of parents agreeing that they are "willing to pay more for something if it's environmentally safe."

Cartoon Network commissioned its third New Generations Philippines survey tailored specifically for the Philippines, the previous editions having been conducted in 2003 and 2005. The survey is a quantitative study that provides unique insights into the minds and habits of Filipino kids aged seven to 14 years.

New Generations 2007 was conducted for Cartoon Network by research company Synovate, via face-to-face, in-home interviews in Metro Manila, Cebu and Davao with a total of 1,000 kids aged seven to 14, with one of their parents. This year, a booster sample of 200 mothers of younger kids aged four to six was added, thereby widening the scope to give a more complete picture of childrens' profiles.

"As part of Cartoon Network's continuing commitment to be the kids' expert in the Philippines, our New Generations Philippines survey is instrumental in helping us update our knowledge of Pinoy kids, and this time we examined how kids' lives are being shaped by the changing digital landscape, how they accept, adapt and live with technological advances," Morris said.



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LBC carries on advancing and fulfilling its mission to reach out to the global Filipino community that will ultimately make the world a smaller place.

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A 'tree of hope' revives an old bamboo craft

A *SINGKABAN* IS AN ARCH MADE OF bamboo used to decorate churches and fiestas in the Philippines for centuries. It is recognized as the most traditional and oldest use of bamboo. Francisco Eligio or Mang Kiko has been a master of this craft since 1958. Before that, his father, Tata Polo was also a popular singkaban maker himself.

Mang Kiko created the Tree of Hope, as conceptualized by well-known lifestyle artist Rachy Cuna, that was the centerpriece of the Christmas Tree of Hope charity project of SM Supermalls and ABS-CBN Foundation's Bantay Bata 163.

The tree celebrates Rachy's love of bamboo. It also showcases the artistry of the 83-year-old living legend of Hagonoy, Bulacan and how he sought the help from those in his village to make the trees and arches for the SM malls.

Mang Kiko recalls that he started young working on his craft. He points out, however, that his father's designs are different from his. Tata Polo's arches were simply decorated with bamboo crosses, but Mang Kiko learned to create more intricate details.

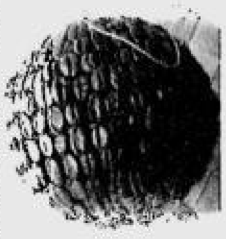
His flower, like rays called *bulalakays*, are made from shaving the skin of bamboo and these set him apart from other singkaban makers in the country. His delicate workmanship creates various shapes such as fans, flowers and triangles in all sizes.

BULACAN craftsman Francisco Eligio shows how to shave off the skin of a bamboo shoot to make flower-like rays called bulakaykay

IT TOOK a village to make this 20 feet Bantay Bata Christmas Tree of Hope.

DURIAN ornaments will be available at SM City Davao

The grand 20 foot tree at SM Mall of Asia does not have the typical bamboo rays. Instead, it has Mang Kiko's famous bamboo flowers shaped from very small and finely shaped bulalakays. The other trees are designed with sets of bamboo alike with the small stems of pine trees attached to a pole one by one until they form the shape of Christmas tree.


THIS Christmas ball made of coffee beans will light up the Tree of Hope of SM City Lipa

Further adding local color are the tree ornaments, which represent the different areas in which the Tree of Hope project will be held. The Mall of Asia's ornaments includes angels as well as the Ojos de Diyos or Eyes of God done by the BB kids. SM City Baguio's tree will have pinecones and strawberries as ornaments, which SM City Lipa will have coffee balls. Mangoes and guitars will adorn the tree at SM City Cebu, masks representing the Maskara Festival will be at SM City Bacolod, native cookies will be hang at the tree in SM City Iloilo; and durian and mangosteen fruits will highlight the tree at SM City Davao. All ornaments are beautifully created in wood or paper maché.

SM Supermalls and ABS-CBN Foundation's Bantay Bata 163 launched their joint Christmas Tree of Hope charity project at the Music Hall of the SM Mall of Asia. This marked Bantay Bata 163's 10th anniversary celebration, as well as the reprise of its partnership with SM to help less fortunate children.

The heartwarming event was graced by ABS-CBN Foundation's Tina Monzon Palma; and members of the Bantay-Bata Advisory Board Mons Tantoco, Fe Rodriguez and Christopher Po with wife Nanette Medved; stylist Rachy Cuna; and Makati Skyline's Lyn Sunico, who's also a Bantay-Bata donor. SM officials led by SM president Tessie Sy-Coson welcomed them.

It will be recalled that SM and ABS-CBN Foundation had the first Christmas Tree of Hope at the SM Megamall ten years ago. There was a giant Christmas tree at the mall's atrium and shoppers could help less fortunate children by buying ornaments, which they would hang on the tree. The project was immensely successful and the 500,000 worth of donations generated from the project became the seed money of Bantay Bata.

This year, SM and Bantay Bata 163 hope to make a difference once more as the Christmas Tree of Hope project makes a tour of the SM Supermalls, including those in the provincial areas. Apart of that at the SM Mall of Asia, there will be other trees of hope at SM City Baguio, SM City Lipa, SM City Cebu, SM City Iloilo, SM City Bacolod and SM City Davao beginning Nov. 16, 2007 to Jan. 6, 2008. The Tree of Hope will also visit other Metro Manila malls like SM City North-Edsa, SM Megamall, SM City Manila and SM Southmall during weekends.

How to bring hope to underprivileged children? A minimum donation entitles one to an ornament to hang at the Tree of Hope. Shoppers may also purchase Bantay Bata items like Pacita Abad cards or make straight donations. All proceeds will go to Bantay Bata's projects, which includes the Children's Village for the kids it has rescued, as well as its educational and medical programs.

The centerpiece of the promotion is the Tree of Hope as conceptualized by the well-known lifestyle artist Rachy Cuna. "I am very happy that both SM and ABS-CBN welcomed my idea of doing something very special for the 10th anniversary celebration," he says. "I thought of doing a traditional Filipino design I had seen during my travels around the country."

The tree, which was made by singkaban maker Francisco Eligio, popularly known as Mang Kiko, celebrates Rachy's love of bamboo. It also showcases the artistry of 83 year old living legend of Hagonoy, Bulacan and how he sought the help from those in his village to make the trees and arches for the SM malls.

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MELINDA Morante with some of her products PHOTOS BY TINA ARCEO-DUMLAO

Saved by the abaca angels

From page B3-4

ACCENT pieces made of abaca, one of Albay's main products

ital.

Since Morante could not spare any more, she got an initial P1,500 loan from the Alternative Systems for Community Development Foundation Inc., a project partner of the Peace and Equity Foundation.

That helped her meet her order and produce more products.

From butterflies, she expanded to making abaca angels of different sizes, and then to bags, mats, slippers, packaging materials and Christmas decorations.

Morante likewise experimented with more materials. From just abaca, she now incorporates other indigenous materials to her craft, such as raffia, buri, seagrass and water lilies.

Her business grew steadily as orders poured in and this allowed Morante to fulfill her initial objective to help her neighbors. From the P1,500 loan, she is now eligible to get P30,000 from Ascode because she has proven herself in business.

From the first six workers, the 55-year-old now has over 40 and she is transferring her skills to other entrepreneurs involved in handicrafts through the Samahang Pagkakaisa ng Maguiron and the Guinobatan Small Entrepreneurs Association.

The groups, which are also assisted by Ascode and PEF, are involved in policy implementation and planning to help the microentrepreneurs grow their business through microfinance.

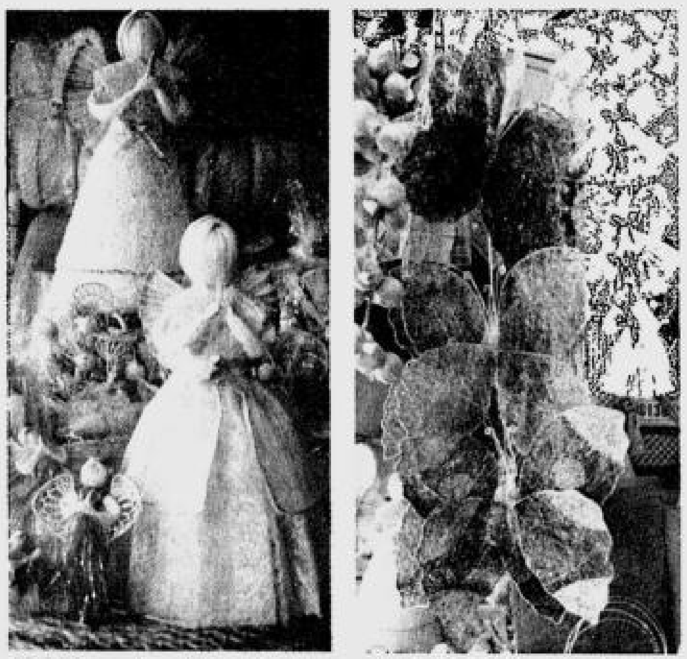
"Everybody knows how to weave but very few have marketing and business sense. So what we are trying to do is to improve their skills and move them from just selling raw materials to producing semi-processed goods and finished products so they can earn more," Ascode executive director Jose Romero said in Filipino.

Morante also said that she and the other handicraft producers of Guinobatan are getting much needed product exposure through the various trade fairs organized throughout the year by PEF, the latest of which will be the Social Development Week from Dec. 3-6 in Manila.

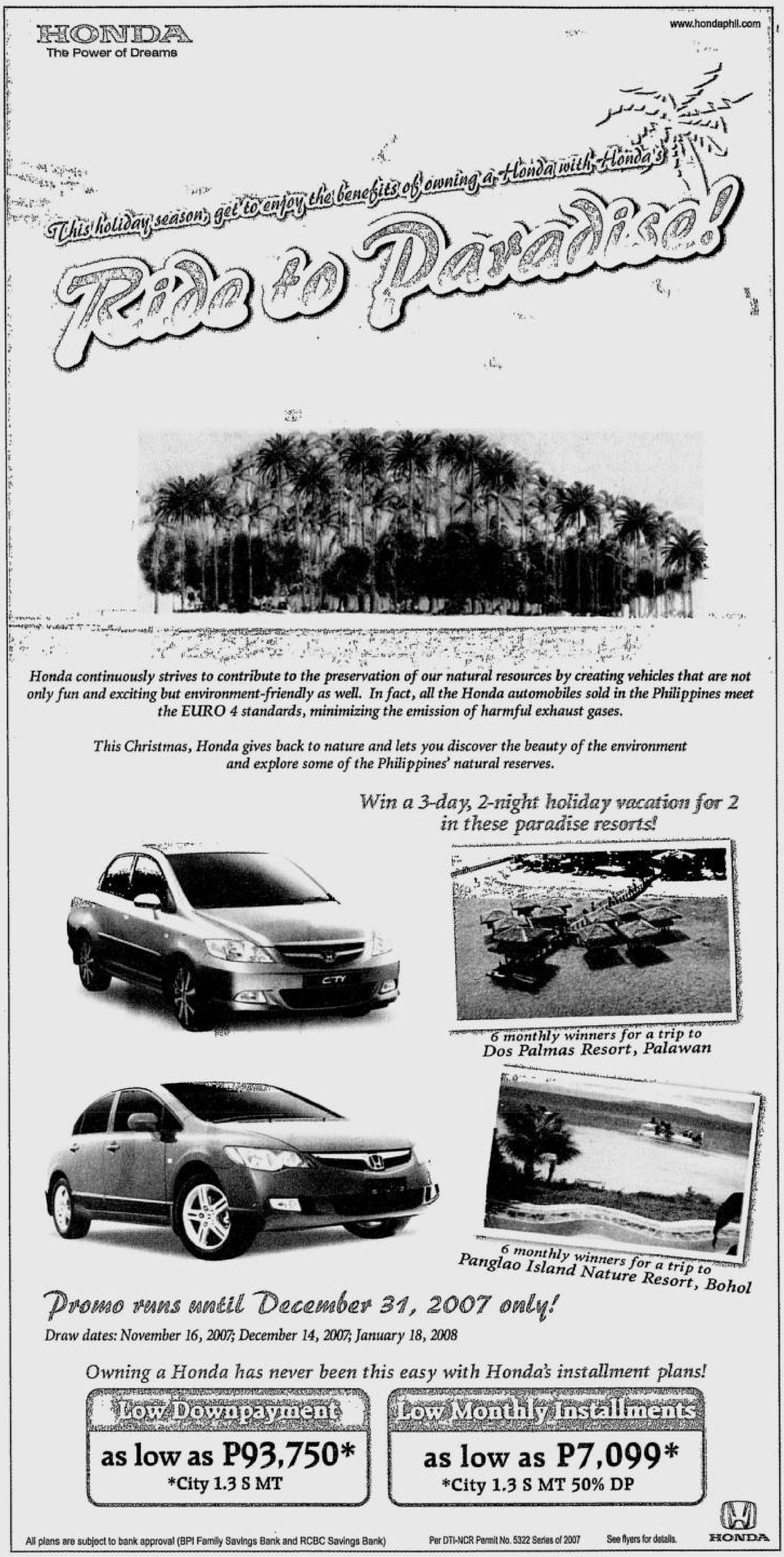
SDW is an annual event hosted by the Caucus of Development NGO Networks in partnership with the Peace and Equity Foundation to encourage the public to appreciate and patronize the products of groups helped by nongovernment organizations.

Morante said the exposure in trade fairs keeps her in touch with product trends so she and her colleagues from Guinobatan can improve their product offering and remain competitive in the market.

They have to because Guinobatan is counting on their success.



ABACA angels and butterflies are among Morante's first products.



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Fast and easy personal loans applications!
Happy customers share insights on GE Money Bank's online application channel

Manila, 26 November 2007 - Customers are talking about the online application system of GE Money Bank, a savings bank. Since the launch of its initial facility for personal loans in its website, customers are enjoying the convenience it provides.

Ms. Ana Liza, a resident of Antipolo, believes that GE Money Bank's online application system is very practical for online folks like her. She said, "Internet-wise, the service is very convenient. I tried it and I could really say that it's fast! All in all, it's user friendly."

When applying for personal loans, simply do three things: (1) visit the GE Money Bank website at www.gemoneybank.com.ph; (2) click on the "APPLY NOW"; and (3) complete the online application process. In just a matter of minutes, you will be able to see if you are eligible for the loan. If you qualify, a loan offer will be flashed on screen. Ms. Fermirelyn of Manila attests that, "Instead of having an agent call me, I got a response on that same day!"

GE Money Bank A Savings Bank

GE Money Bank's new channel is initially available for personal loan applications at flexible payment terms and for as low as 1.39% add-on rate per month. The loans offered initially include personal loans, but will soon be offered for auto loans and home loans.

This easy way of applying for loans is consistent with GE Money Bank's thrust to offer simply better banking to its customers. "This is convenient and fast," added Jocelyn from Quezon City.

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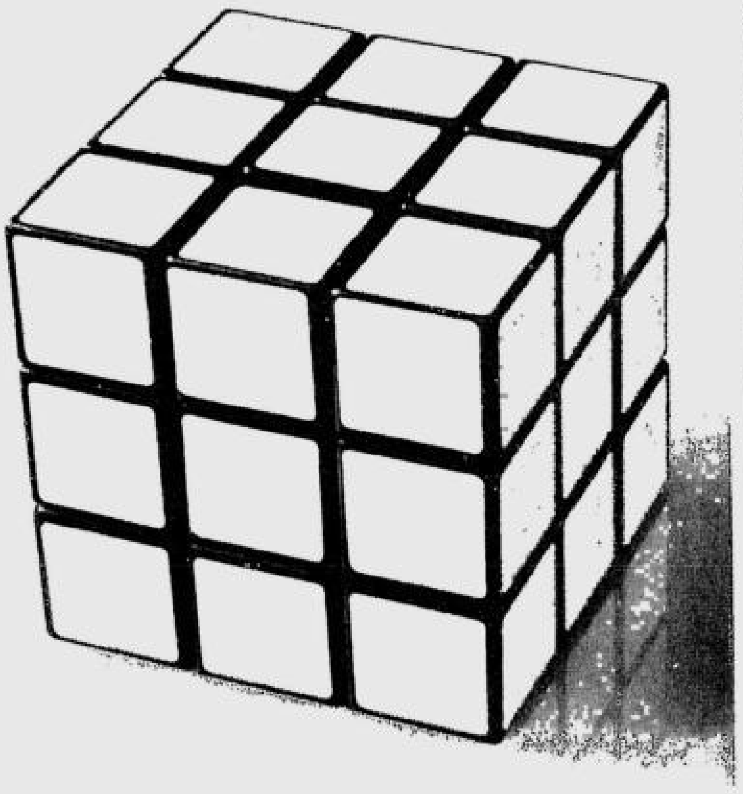

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Morante is known for her abaca angels.

Saved by the abaca *angels*

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

GUINOBATAN, ALBAY—IT has been a year since super typhoon Reming brought Albay to its knees.

But, just like the province, entrepreneur Melinda Morante is slowly getting back on her feet.

Morante told the INQUIRER that she lost P200,000 worth of handicrafts when flood waters swept into her stalls in the Guinobatan public market and another P500,000 when the floods ruined her inventory at the height of the typhoon in November last year.

But rather than give up on her trade, she went back to it with a vengeance.

She was encouraged by the thought that many families were depending on her for their livelihood, especially at that time when everybody was reeling from one of the strongest typhoons to hit the province.

Morante said her immediate problem was to look for raw materials because the typhoon extensively damaged Albay's abaca plantations. She had to go to Samar, Leyte and as far as Sultan Kudarat to get the abaca that she needed to produce her handicrafts.

This meant an increase in production costs because raw materials had to be brought in from other provinces, but Morante was determined to forge ahead.

"I thought then that if I stopped, I would not have any chance of a recovery. It was better to try and not give up," Morante said in Filipino.

Rebuilding from scratch

She asked her more than 40 artisans to resume work. Instead of asking them to stay in her production house in the town proper of Guinobatan, her workers now stay at home so they can take care of their family's needs as they weave the abaca products that Morante sells.

Rebuilding her business practically from scratch reminds Morante of how she got started in the business in 1988 with a capital of just P5,000 from her own savings.

Morante, a midwife by profession, was inspired to put up her own business because she felt she needed to provide her neighbors in Brgy. Maguiron with an alternative source of income.

Morante said that since an estimated three of five Albay residents are involved somehow in the handicraft industry, going into handicrafts seemed the best step to take even if she herself knew little about the trade.

But what she lacked in technical skills she made up for in creativity.

She had a lot of designs on her mind that she asked others to execute.

Her first products were butterflies made of abaca and wire that she got six women to weave and put together.

"Fortunately, there was an exporter based in Daraga who saw my butterflies and ordered P3,000 worth of them. That became my first big order and that led to more," said Morante, who is in charge of product design.

More production, however, required cap-

SAVED/ B3-3

CHRISTMAS balls made of abaca sell well.

Bacteria that restores 'mined out' soil uncovered in old mine

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—WHO WOULD HAVE thought that a lowly fungus is the country's best bet to reclaim lands denuded for years by mining?

Dr. Aida Lapis, a forest specialist of the Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau, said the mining industry may have to include Mycorrhizal in their vocabulary because tests conducted on this fungus at the open-pit mines of Benguet Corp. have proven that it keeps alive trees planted on mined out areas.

Lapis presented the test results at the 54th Mine Safety Conference at the Camp John Hay-CAP convention hall here.

The fungus has properties that help tree roots access nutrients from soil rendered impotent by the chemicals used to process extracted metals, she said.

She said the government has been busy studying the fastest way to reforest at least 15 abandoned mines in the country because of its mandate to reclaim half-a-century-old mines.

Executive Order No. 270 introduced the national policy agenda on revitalizing mining which makes mine rehabilitation a government priority.

Benguet Corp., the country's oldest mine, has sustained its operations by leasing out its tunnels to mid-level and small-scale miners or by arranging joint venture deals.

But many other mines were abandoned as early as the 1980s when firms closed due to the poor world metals trade or because they could no longer produce high quality ore.

Lapis said these old mines left "impoverished soil," which are "highly acidic" because of the high metallic content left over from mine operations.

Old mine soil is generally inhospitable to plant life, she said.

Lapis said mines could import genetically modified plants to address the soil quality but indigenous trees are far more cost-effective if their roots can survive long enough to take hold of mined out real estate.

Keeping these trees alive, however, "was the bigger challenge," she told mine executives.

Existing biological studies already established the advantages of Mycorrhizal, which thrives symbiotically with plant roots.

But the government needs to make sure it can help local varieties like the Benguet pine, narra, agoho, batino and kupang, Lapis said.

Pine trees are abundant in Benguet, where most of the oldest mines operate.

Lapis said batino and kupang were selected because these tree species helped rejuvenate the forested sections being harnessed by a mine firm in Palawan.

Researchers at the University of the Philippines in Los Baños, Laguna, modified the Mycorrhizal so the fungus can be injected into the sample trees.

Kupang tree roots proved to benefit greatly from the Mycorrhizal inoculation, Lapis said.

Further tests will have to be conducted to determine how Mycorrhizal helped cleanse the soil metals absorbed by the plant's leaves and flowering buds.

Lapis said these researches are also meant to help mine firms which are about to end their operations.

Philex Mining Corp. has been preparing to end its mine operations in Tuba, Benguet, by undertaking what may be the first modern exit program that involves developing local economies and establishing new social roots for its former employees to cushion the impact of an operational shutdown.

The firm has extended its mine life in the province, however, although it has sustained its livelihood initiatives.

Aussies say RP mines do well by partnering with foreign experts

By Vincent Cabreza
Inquirer Northern Luzon

BAGUIO CITY—PARTNERSHIP HAS been the best way for the mining industry to profit from the mining boom in the country, and Australia's Filipino partners are proving this new industry dictum.

Robert Gregory, managing director of Rusina Mining N.L. and chief of the Fil-Asian Strategic Resources and Properties Corp., said partnering with foreign firms distributes fiscal, political and technical risks to help most operations survive.

That's the rule that has helped Rusina build up the Acoje project in Sta. Cruz, Zambales, Gregory told mine executives at the 54th Mine Safety Conference here.

"Basically, your [the country's] production sharing agreements say you have to have a partner. But that's not the only reason. With a partner [in the Philippines], you spread the risks financially, you spread your risks politically, and you spread the risks technically," he said.

"Really, we can't move forward in any part of the world unless we go into partnerships," he said, because it is a trend that fuels world markets today.

Joint ventures have been keeping most local mine operations afloat, after a collapse in world metal prices between the 1980s and the 1990s caused most Philippine mine firms to shut down or slow down operations.

Glen Noble, Mines and Geosciences Bureau chief of the mineral economics, information and publication division, said the industry has bounced back, with $879 million already driving new mine projects since 2004, and another $9.5 billion now being anticipated to finance major mine operations by 2010.

Mining remains a "misunderstood industry," he said, but environmental activism and the bureaucracy no longer scare away foreign capital, he said.

Gregory said the true value of business partnering that is encouraged by the Philippine Mining Code of 1995 is that it opens new opportunities.

Old mines have started to look into the potentials of energy, water and real estate as a result of the new mine coalitions, Noble said, citing a metals firm that has diversified into power generation.

"Partnerships combine expertise," Gregory said as he cited the potentials of Rusina for a gold mining venture. He said Rusina was interested in Acoje because of its nickel laterite resource.

During the '70s, the Philippines, South Africa, Siberia and Stillwater in the United States were the only major sources of commercial platinum, he said. Platinum prices were double the price of gold at the time.

Acoje was a pre-war chrome operation until miners discovered platinum there, he said.

It closed in the 1990s because of the meals price plunge but was revived in 2004.

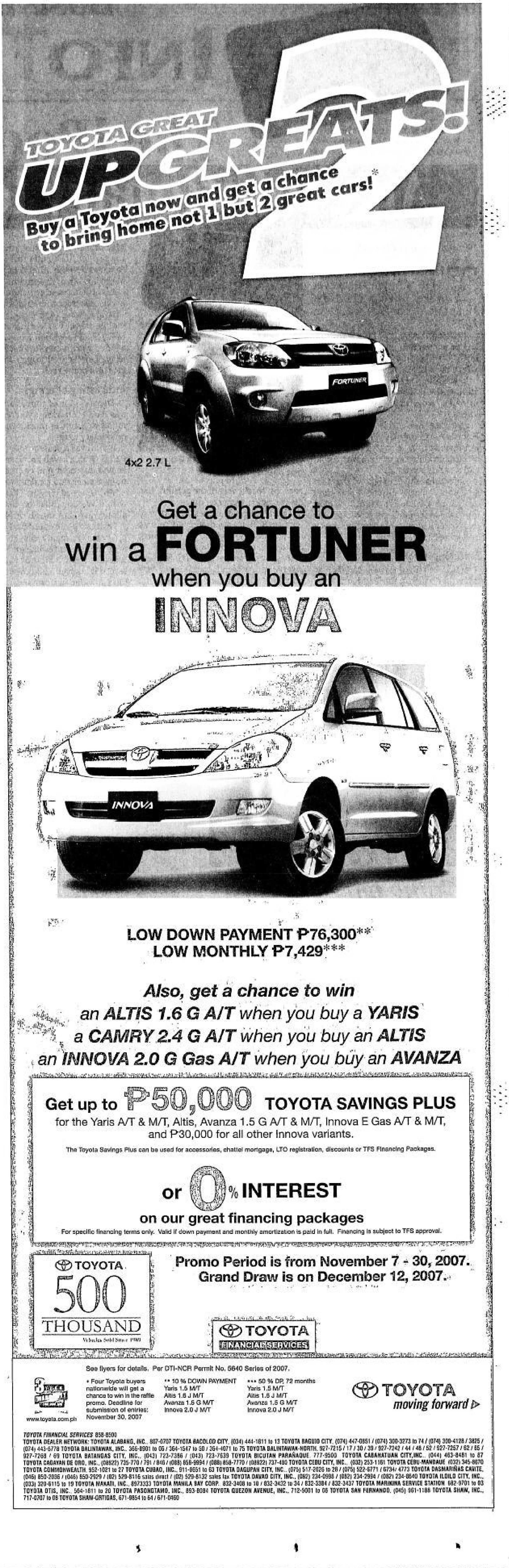
Business partnerships abetted by government was helpful in addressing labor issues, Gregory said. "It's a worldwide phenomenon. Getting the proper skills into company endeavors is becoming more and more difficult," he said, referring to the decline in Filipinos enrolling in mining courses.

Partnerships offer the Philippines a pool of expertise abroad to fill up the vacuum as mining ventures begin actual operations in the next five years, he said.

Partnerships also help Australian investors to bridge a cultural gap.

Albert Eacott, Australian safety manager of Oceanagold Philippines which runs the gold operations in Didipio valley, said partnerships helped him introduce a community and operational feedback system to help address problems attributed to the mine.

Given the cultural differences of some villages, the feedback system is not meant to place blame but to address solutions, he said.



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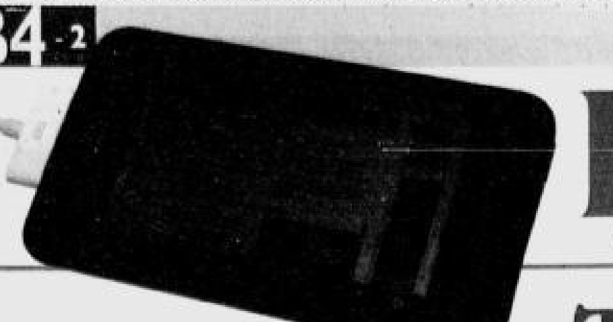
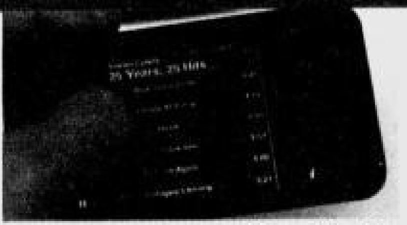


THE iPod touch's gorgeous 3.5-inch widescreen display makes Web browsing as well as buying music wirelessly more fun

The iPod touch: An evolutionary leap

Text and photos by Charles E. Buban



SCROLL up or down, or side to side with just a flick of a finger

WHILE browsing, iPod touch lets you type directly to the screen

COMPARED to the recently launched iPod touch, the two-year old shuffle already looked Neanderthal

THIS WRITER HAS BEEN a fan of Apple's iPod ever since buying the first generation shuffle back in 2005.

The size of a pack of bubble gum, it has no screen and only good for playing 120 songs (my budget could only afford the 512 MB variant).

It was the start of this writer's love affair with the iPod, upgrading to a mini and a nano in the years that followed.

Just last week, this writer visited Power Mac Center Greenbelt 3 and as in previous trips to the store, planned on just drooling at the various Apple gadgets displayed.

Unfortunately, the sight of the slim and shiny black, all-metal-and-glass design of the newly launched iPod touch was too much a temptation and this writer had no other recourse but to break the bank, so to speak.

Matching iPhone

At P22,990 (for the 16 GB variant that this writer bought), the iPod touch is indeed, an evolutionary leap for iPod and perhaps, for the rest of the portable media player in the market today.

The iPod touch comes in two variants: an 8 GB model that could hold up to 1,750 songs, and the 16 GB, which could hold up to 3,500 songs.

It espouses minimalism as it features just two ports both located on the bottom (one for the headphone and the other for docking the device with a Mac or a PC) and two buttons (one at the top left to handle the sleep/wake function and the other, a home button, at the bottom of the screen).

It's also interesting to note that some of the specs of the iPod touch match that of iPhone (Apple's much awaited mobile phone) as both feature a 3.5-inch scratch-resistant glass screen with a video worthy resolution of 480 x 320 as well as the multitouch screen interface and home screen.

Interesting offerings

There's a lot of thing to enjoy with this iPod even if, say, you're not in the mood to listen to music, watch video, or look at pictures.

It features a scaled-down version of Safari (Apple's web browser), YouTube viewer, calendar and contacts applications, a clock and a calculator.

Yes, you read it right: This is the iPod with a Wi-Fi connection that will also allow you to buy music wirelessly.

Of course, one could find other similar portable media player that offer even more features like an FM radio, a Bluetooth connection or even a audio recorder, as well as higher quality audio and video performance.

But this writer is quite confident that he won't find any other product that could match the feeling that one could enjoy while using the iPod touch interface.

No match

Unlike other devices with touchscreen feature, iPod's multitouch screen allows for a more natural input that does not require a stylus.

With a graceful swoop of a finger, one could easily scroll down lists of artists, albums, and playlists or move a stack of album covers much like thumbing through a virtual vinyl collection.

Doing the "pinch and expand" motion in the iPod touch is also entrancing and much appreciated when browsing the Internet as one could quickly zoom into an item in the screen or make photos even much bigger for closer inspection.

Built-in accelerometer

One could view what's on screen either vertically or horizontally—the switch happens when you tilt the iPod touch in any orientation, thanks to a built-in accelerometer (that which measures acceleration and tilt).

Indeed, Apple's iPod line has been steadily evolving over the past years since the first iPod was introduced in 2001.

While the iPod touch won't match the hard drive capacity of the iPod Classic line (that offers up to 160 GB of storage and could carry up to 40,000 songs), it's multitouch interface, its ability to surf the web via WiFi connection as well as access the iTunes music store wirelessly are enough reasons to invest in the iPod touch.

SMART
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Going wireless? Just plug in Smart BRO

By Riza T. Olchondra

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO make Internet access available to more people? For Smart Communications Inc., the answer is a cool gadget with an attractive price tag.

Putting its money where its mouth is, Smart has launched a new gadget from wireless broadband subsidiary Smart Broadband Inc. (SBI), which it claims will enable users to access the Internet without busting their budget.

SBI president Rolando G. Peña said that under his firm's Plan 799, customers will get a USB modem that may be plugged to a laptop or a desktop computer. This will allow users to access the Internet with speeds ranging from 384 to 768 kbps.

The modem is compatible with Windows 2000 and XP, although technical personnel are working to have the modem work with other operating systems before the end of the year.

"This takes Internet access to the next level. With the portable USB modem, areas that previously could not avail of broadband services will have instant Internet access, as long as there is Smart network coverage. Through this, we will be able to achieve our goal of connecting those in the remote provinces to the rest of the world, thus, providing true mobility," Peña said.

Smart now has 2,678 wireless broadband-enabled base stations providing high-speed Internet access to over 625 cities and municipalities nationwide.

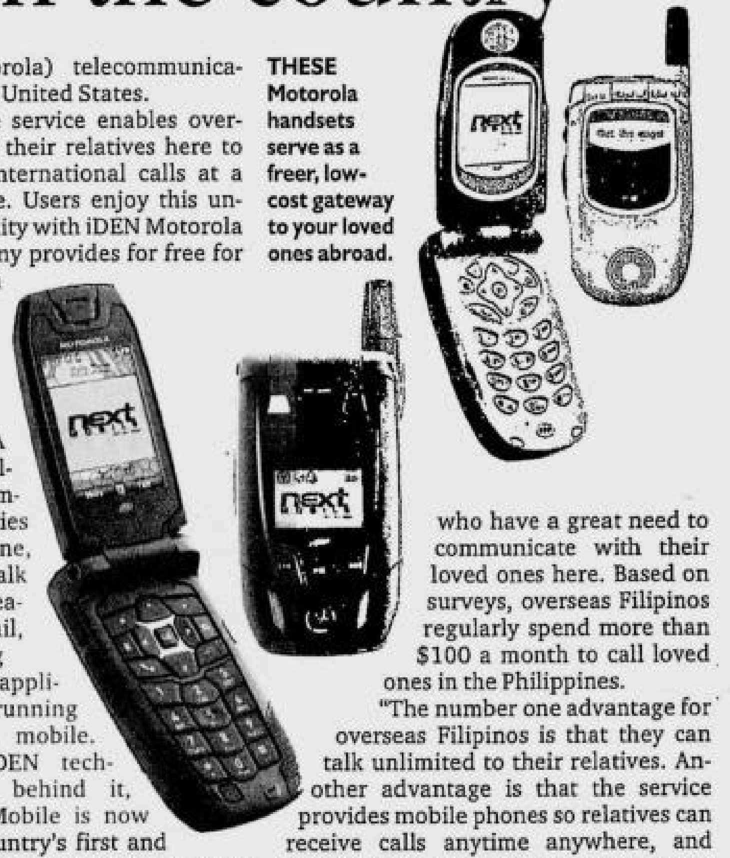
As of September this year, 259,000 users are accessing the Internet through the Smart Bro network.

Plan 799 comes with a USB modem, PC software and a user guide. At P799 a month, the plan covers Internet use for 60 hours, and P10 every 30 minutes in excess thereof.

The modem goes for a one-time charge of P1,999.

Next Mobile introduces first VoIP mobile service in the country

By Raquel P. Gomez



THESE Motorola handsets serve as a freer, low-cost gateway to your loved ones abroad.

The Motorola i415 model.

ONE OF THE MAJOR BENEFITS THE INTERnet has brought to consumers is the VoIP, or Voice over Internet Protocol technology. VoIP is the routing of voice conversations over the Internet or through any other IP-based network.

Simply put, it is a technology that turns telephony signals to digital audio and makes them pass as compressed data over the Internet, which is a worldwide interconnection of computer networks.

Ebay-owned Skype has the more popular technology label associated with VoIP. It developed the software that allows Internet users to make calls from their computers to other Skype users worldwide, as well as to other land-line phones and cell phones for free.

Ever since Skype introduced free calls over the Internet, major telecommunications companies worldwide have begun to use the technology and take advantage of its benefits and lower call costs which they can pass on to consumers.

Have you ever wondered why telcos here are able to make their IDD rates lower and even unlimited under certain promos? That's the effect of VoIP—lower cost for international calls.

Now comes even more good news—a new mobile phone service that lets users receive VoIP calls unlimited through their mobile handsets.

Next Mobile, a new mobile telephony license holder, introduces MyWorld Phone, a service that uses VoIP and is made available through the company's link to roaming partners in more than 100 countries. In particular, it has a strategic partnership with Sprint Nextel, a big provider of iDEN (integrated Digital Enhanced Network developed by Motorola) telecommunications service in the United States.

MyWorld Phone service enables overseas Filipinos and their relatives here to enjoy unlimited international calls at a fixed monthly rate. Users enjoy this unlimited call capability with iDEN Motorola phones the company provides for free for a one-year lock in service with them.

iDEN technology, which is a wireless technology that uses TDMA (time division multiple access), combines the capabilities of a cellular phone, digital push-to-talk or walkie-talkie feature, e-mail, messaging and data applications running on java mobile. With iDEN technology behind it, Next Mobile is now the country's first and only provider of mobile VoIP in the Philippines.

Here's how the mobile VoIP offered by MyWorld Phone works: A user based in the Philippines is given at least two numbers, a Philippine number and foreign number, for example, a number in New York. A relative in New York can call your New York number which, for that relative, is like calling a neighbor in the same area, even though you and your relative are literally worlds apart. Your New York relative practically will incur no call charge.

Now, the Philippine number works like a reloadable prepaid cell phone number and may be used to call other local networks here—Globe, Smart, PLDT, or Sun.

Next Mobile's chairman and CEO Mel Velarde says the new phone service targets overseas Filipinos who have a great need to communicate with their loved ones here. Based on surveys, overseas Filipinos regularly spend more than $100 a month to call loved ones in the Philippines.

"The number one advantage for overseas Filipinos is that they can talk unlimited to their relatives. Another advantage is that the service provides mobile phones so relatives can receive calls anytime anywhere, and there's no need for Internet, computer or VoIP gadget, PINS or passwords to enjoy unlimited long distance calls."

MyWorld Phone, which currently gives access to 26 countries, comes in three packages: For a fixed monthly rate of $39.90, MyWorld Inbound provides unlimited calls from abroad, unlimited push-to-talk and unlimited SMS within Next Mobile network, and P200 consumable load.

For a fixed monthly rate of $59.99, MyWorld Outbound provides access based on the lowest IDD rate of P1.75 per minute. Subscribers can enjoy as much as 1800 minutes of IDD calls to their chosen country, unlimited push-to-talk and SMS within Next Mobile network, and an additional free 100 minutes IDD calls to 22 countries.

For a fixed monthly rate of $89.99, MyWorld Two-Way provides unlimited calls abroad plus 1800 minutes of IDD calls, an additional 100 minutes of IDD and unlimited push-to-talk and SMS within Next Mobile network.

LG Electronics focusing on eco-friendly energy solution business

LG ELECTRONICS, ONE OF THE world's leading manufacturer of air conditioners, is venturing into the eco-friendly energy solution business to address power and environmental issues.

"Eco-friendly and efficient products are becoming more and more important due to rising oil prices and unpredictable climate change," said Jeff Hong, CEO of LG Electronics Philippines.

"By combining our new energy solution business with our industry-leading air conditioners, we are not only responding to the economical needs of our consumers but also developing a new growth engine for future business."

Starting next year, LG will diversify its business by launching energy solution services and systems. Under the plan, the company will work with customers through the entire process of establishing an energy system for public buildings; from suggestion to planning, ordering, operational supervision and maintenance of the energy system.

LG has already developed innovative hybrid energy solution systems such as Hybrid Cogen and Hybrid XEO, which have demonstrated the company's capabilities in energy saving and cost reduction.

Hybrid Cogen uses less energy to simultaneously generate electricity and heat utilizing liquefied natural gas (LNG) that can reduce the emission of environmental pollutants.

With the combination of an inverter system air conditioner with geothermal heat pumps, Hybrid XEO would reduce energy consumption by about 30 percent yearly.

According to the World Market for Air Conditioning 2006, a market research report published by the Building Services Research and Information Association (BSRIA), the air conditioner market will grow to US$65 billion by 2010, while the energy solutions market-- including solar, wind and geothermal energy-- will grow to US$ 75 billion.

Competition for Asian talents to get keener

AS THE WORKING AGE POPULATIONS in major developed countries follow a downward trend in the next two decades, global companies are highly likely to search for talent in Asia where the work forces are expected to exhibit robust growth.

In a media presentation, Watson Wyatt consultant Russell Huntington, forecasted that top organizations are likely to be hiring executives from China, India and Southeast Asia—in that order—as the working age populations in these areas increase.

Among Southeast Asians, Filipinos are likely to emerge as among the most highly in demand as they already are today, said the human capital group director for Watson Wyatt's Asia Pacific operations, who is based in Melbourne, Australia.

Backed by company studies including Watson Wyatt's 2007 Annual Survey on human resource practices in 400 top companies in 11 countries in Asia Pacific, Huntington said that business organizations across the globe today are competing for talent and the situation has changed the face of employment tenure among professionals and workers worldwide.

Being loyal to a company for most of one's working life, the predominant mode in the 70s and 80s, is no longer the norm. In the business processing outsourcing sectors including those in the Philippines, an employee is expected to stay no longer than three years. He added that the average Hong Kong employee stays on the job for about the same period. Within a young worker's first 15 years of employment, he would have changed jobs three or four times.

As companies compete to attract talent, employee packages which encompass base pay, benefits, incentives as well as training have dramatically improved. In the past five years, average salary increases in 13 countries in Asia Pacific including the Philippines were way above the cost of inflation. Huntington explained that increases beyond the inflation rate were driven by keen demand for talent.

In the Philippines, the net salary increase over the past five years was at 9.2 percent; almost double the average inflation rate of 5.1 percent. In China which suffers a shortage of managerial talent, salary increases averaged 8.1 percent as against the inflation rate of 2.4 percent.

In Asia Pacific, Watson Wyatt has three research centers in Singapore, Wuhan and Delhi to study labor and talent trends in the region. In the Philippines, it draws from factual evidence to provide a range of services to majority of the leading corporations and respected institutions.

Huntington disclosed that many leading Asia Pacific firms have dealt with the dearth of talent by repatriating executives who had migrated to global capitals by offering them attractive packages. According to James Matti, managing consultant of the Manila practice, many of the top executives in the Philippines are recruited from the United States, Singapore, and Hong Kong, the UK, Indonesia, etc.

He observed that local firms preferred to recruit Filipinos with work experience in global capitals because they understand the home culture and at the same time have a global perspective. In addition, the overseas experience is likely to have further honed their technical expertise and the ability to deal with various nationalities in a seamless manner.

Huntington, nevertheless, clarified that financial incentives were not the only key feature of many of the packages being offered to top executives. The Asian labor expert explained that the most effective packages included competitive base pay, opportunities to grow, and challenging roles within a winning organization.

Matti clarified that in a recently concluded Watson Wyatt Global Strategic Rewards survey that covered 22 countries including the Philippines, nature of work was cited by employees as the top reason they considered when joining a firm. On the other hand, they cited high stress levels as the top reason for leaving a firm. Employees considered base pay only as the secondary reason for both joining or leaving an organization.

Huntington further observed that many firms in the region recognized the need not only for strategies to recruit and retain talent but also for programs that engage, focus and grow talent. According to the Watson Wyatt definition, engaged employees are those that understand the organization's business goals, the steps required to attain them, and how they could contribute to reaching those goals. He clarified that top performing companies are now seeking engaged employees rather than loyal ones. "For as long as they are committed and focused on goals, they will remain with a company," he observed.

To retain talent, Asian companies have adapted different strategies. Singapore firms simply poach from other countries because of the limited pool of talent in the Lion City, according to Huntington. Malaysian companies dangle salary hikes, while Indonesian firms even go to the extent of arranging blind dates for their young staff who work long hours.

He cited the Philippines for employing the novel tactic of creating home-like workplaces that include health clubs and even sleeping quarters to attract and retain young employees, particularly those in the call centers.

Creative recruitment will sustain call center growth

IT IS TIME TO GET OUT OF THE BOX AND venture into innovative and more creative kinds of recruitment in the call center and business process outsourcing (BPO) industries, for at stake in the next few years is a potential revenue of 10 to 12 billion dollars.

Industry players who hope to catch a larger share of the pie that is being dominated by regional giants such as India and China must contend with challenges such as the deteriorating quality in English communication skills and a reluctance among the younger applicants.

While many call centers have decried that the supply of agents and other manpower needs far outnumbers the burgeoning demand which projects 150,000 seats up to the year 2007, eTelecare Human Resources director Eric Concepcion says "we have barely scratched the surface of potential candidates who can turn out to be assets to their respective companies."

He points out, "A number of the 400,000 graduates who enter the workforce each year remain unemployed. The hiring yield rates are going down—from a double-digit high to five percent or even less. That means there are many people out there whom we have not even screened yet."

eTelecare itself ventures out of its safe confines, sending recruiters to the farthest corners of the country in search of talent. Concepcion continues, "We make sure that there is no labor pool out there, whether from North to South that we haven't tapped. Our job caravans try to reach all areas in the archipelago where there are potential applicants."

He also points out that the Filipino employee has a lot of good qualities that make him excel in the industry. Though the English fluency standards are deteriorating, "we do have history as a good English-speaking country, we are a patient people, and we have a very close affinity with our American colleagues."

Concepcion adds that slowing down present recruitment efforts is not an option. "The Philippines cannot assume thinking that some of the business will just trickle down here. We have to take advantage of the demand in the industry right now. One way to do that is to get many of the programs from the customers as we can handle before they get shipped to either India or China or even outside of Asia."

Many of Concepcion's industry colleagues are cognizant of the situation their industry is facing which can be summarized this way, "Most of the call centers right now are not scaling back in terms of their requirements; their successes in the last few years have fueled their appetite for expansion and growth. But we are starting to see a labor crunch, the Philippine situation is not yet as pronounced [as that of India, 5 or 7 years ago] but we're seeing that right now."

One way to leap over that hurdle is exploring nontraditional sources of manpower like job sites. eTelecare has partnered with JobsDB Philippines Inc., Asia's premiere Internet recruitment network which has 750,000 resumes of qualified professionals in their database. JobsDB also holds an average of four job fairs a month in the Philippines in association with schools and universities, local government units, business corporations and industry sectors. eTelecare sources 10-15 percent of their over-all recruitment needs from JobsDB.

Another means is by changing paradigms and removing negative preconceptions about the industry that have discouraged potential talents from all walks of life, ages and specialties from even applying.

Third, happy, motivated employees become the best recruiters as they encourage friends, relatives, colleagues and acquaintances they believe qualified to try their hand in the industry.

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"More than Just Sand, Surf and Shopping: Opportunities for the Philippines in Medical Tourism"
Mr. Robert F. Kuan, Chairman of the Board, St. Luke's Medical Center

Medical bills in the U.S. and Europe have risen so high that it now has become cheaper for westerners to fly to the East to seek medical care. Medical tourism has thus become one of the fastest growing global industries. With its pool of highly-trained medical practitioners and worldwide reputation for excellence in patient care, the Philippines is well-positioned to tap this global market opportunity. Find out how St. Luke's Medical Center has taken advantage of the worldwide surge in medical tourism, and how its dynamic Chairman, the legendary founder of the Chowking food chain, has spearheaded its drive to become a top-rated medical facility not just in the Philippines, but in the region.

"Non-Traditional Ways of Reaching Your Target Segments"
Ms. Ma. Teresa D. Villanueva, President, AdBoard of the Philippines; Chief Executive Officer, Publicis Manila

With so many brands talking, how do you know if your customers are listening? Ms. Matec Villanueva holds the reins at Publicis Manila, the country's largest advertising agency, and shares with us her tips for laser-sharp targeting: making sure that our message does not just stand out in an increasingly congested marketplace, but that it also finds its way into the arms and ears of the market for which it was intended.

"Best Practices and Opportunities in Online Advertising"
Ms. Rosalind Tan, Senior Sales Manager, Yahoo! Southeast Asia

Marketing messages are everywhere, flooding all the available media, including the internet. Many have tried to tap the online market with limited success. If not done well, your message can get drowned out by the heavy volume of online noise. The rapid convergence of internet services and interfaces has increased the challenges of maximizing opportunities in online advertising. But when done well, the rewards remain great. Find out how Ms. Rosalind Tan, Senior Sales Manager of Yahoo! Southeast Asia has steered Yahoo! to develop tailor-made, interactive solutions for its regional clients, including Nokia, Sony Ericsson, Samsung, HSBC and DBS; and find out how you, too, can successfully tap the young, wealthy and well-educated market that has gone increasingly online.

"The Fast and the Furious: Pushing Push-Button Digital Entertainment"
Mr. Jay Paolo de Leon Adevoso, Country Manager, LaNetro Zed Philippines

After "instant", "real time" has become the new standard for digital entertainment and community products. Nonstop innovation and media integration have brought mobile and internet services—from games and sounds to videos and blogs—to the next level. Discover how Mr. Jay Paolo Adevoso, Country Manager of LaNetro Zed Philippines, has developed local business for the global mobile network and how he has steered the company to become a high-growth Php1 billion revenue organization. Find out how the wireless community can be a lucrative new market for your company, or how you can use wireless technology to more creatively and cost-effectively reach your existing ones.

"Using Network Marketing as a Blue Ocean Strategy"
Mr. Josiah Go, President and CEO, Waters Philippines

Rather than the traditional audience of end-buyers, successful network marketing entails finding the right people to represent your company and your products. Companies can develop strong, profitable niches by creating a network of sellers, whether they be full-time or part-time, without having to spend on mass media. Find out how you can apply network marketing as a Blue Ocean Strategy through best-selling author Josiah Go, President and CEO of Waters Philippines and one of the most successful practitioners of network marketing in the Philippines. Josiah, who has held the position of Chairman of the Direct Selling Association as well as National President of the Philippine Marketing Association, is also the country's only qualified facilator of the Blue Ocean Strategy from the Blue Ocean Strategy Institute, Insead, France.

"Helping Overseas Filipinos Find Their Way Home: Marketing Real Estate to Overseas Filipinos"
Mr. Rex Ma. A Mendoza, Chairman, Ayala Land International Sales, Inc. and President, Ayala Land Sales, Inc.

The current boom in real estate is now currently attributed to overseas Filipinos who are investing their hard-earned money in the land of their birth. From condominiums to weekend homes, new houses to retirement communities, the opportunities for growth in real estate are booming, and Filipinos abroad have become a major market. Ayala Land is a key driver behind this boom, with its diverse product portfolio and its seasoned and well-travelled marketing team. Get insights on tapping the global Filipino from Rex Mendoza, the key executive leading Ayala's real estate sales and marketing efforts abroad, as he shares his experiences on successfully marketing Ayala Land's diverse projects to the Filipino diaspora.

Grand Ballroom, Hotel Intercontinental, Makati City December 5, 2007 Wednesday 8am – 5pm

Declining sales beset seaweed industry

RP could lose position as world's top producer

By Irene R. Sino Cruz
Inquirer Visayas

BENSON U. Dakay, president of Seaweed Industry Association of the Philippines and chief executive officer of Shemberg Marketing Corp.

CEBU CITY—UNLESS GOVERNMENT takes immediate action on the problems besetting the seaweed industry, the Philippines would lose its position as the world's top seaweed producer, an industry leader warned.

Benson U. Dakay, president of the Seaweed Industry Association of the Philippines and Shemberg Marketing Corp. chief executive officer, also warned that thousands of seaweed farmers would lose a major source of their income as local processors source their raw seaweed from Indonesia.

Dakay, termed as the "Seaweed King," said seaweed production has been declining as the government agencies tasked to implement the seaweed development program have yet to take concrete action.

The Bureau of Agricultural Statistics data showed that the *eucheuma cottonii* seaweed production reached 112,470 metric tons in 2000.

However, seaweed production went down to 89,200 metric tons in 2003 and dropped further to only 82,560 metric tons in 2006.

While the Philippine seaweed production has been on a decline over the past several years, Dakay says Indonesia's seaweed production had registered consistent growth.

In 2002, Philippine seaweed production reached 96,120 metric tons, way above Indonesia's 46,700 metric tons. But in 2006, Philippine production went down to 80,000 metric tons while that of Indonesia rose to 80,000 metric tons.

Dakay noted that, in the past, the seaweed shipment to Zamboanga reached 80,000 70-kilo bags each month.

With the lower production in seaweed farms in Tawi-Tawi and other parts of southwestern Mindanao, Dakay said there are only an average of 20,000 70-kilo bags of seaweed reaching Zamboanga each month.

The scarcity of locally grown seaweed drove the prices up to $1,200 per metric ton, much higher than the price of Indonesian seaweed at $700 per metric ton, he said.

Dakay said most local processors would have preferred to use locally grown seaweed because it has a much better quality. "But, its getting cheaper to import Indonesian seaweed," he added.

Dakay said many seaweed processors, beset with stronger peso, supply shortage and rising prices of seaweed, now source the bulk of their raw material requirement from Indonesia.

Dakay placed the industry total seaweed requirement at 200,000 metric tons. Since the local seaweed production reached only 80,000 metric tons, the processors have no choice but to get the balance from Indonesia.

He said the declining seaweed production could be traced to the rising sea temperature. Dakay explained that the warm seawater near the shore is no longer conducive to seaweed farming.

But setting up seaweed farms in the deep sea would require bigger investment and new technology, two areas in which the government could extend assistance to the seaweed farmers that have been dependent on the industry for their livelihood, Dakay said.

He lamented the government inaction, adding that the seaweed industry has been helping in the poverty alleviation program since it created more jobs than the other marine product sectors. He had also credited the seaweed industry as having helped promote peace in Western Mindanao.

A research conducted by Dr. Sitti Amina M. Jain, assistant regional director of the Department of Trade and Industry in Region 9, noted that the seaweed industry, considered the lifeblood of marginal sector in Western Mindanao, benefited 24,712 farmers and provides livelihood to over 130,000 persons in Zamboanga Peninsula alone. Jain also cited a report of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Growth with Equity in Mindanao (GEM) that it helped 24,000 former Moro National Liberation Front combatants who ventured into seaweed farming.

Jain's research also found that many MNLF combatants turned to seaweed farming as "a means of subsistence" because of the "inadequate livelihood assistance offered them by the government."

Jain's research also found that seaweed farming serves as the farmer's alternative to poverty. But she urged government and nongovernment sectors to help the farmers gain access to financing and productive resources to help them increase production and expand farm areas.

These recommendations have been included in the National Seaweed Development Plan signed by various stakeholders and government agencies in the presence of President Macapagal-Arroyo several years ago.

Dakay also cited as misleading the seaweed export figures. While the seaweed exports have registered an increase each year, from $113.29 million in 2001 to $149.98 million in 2006, Dakay attributed the increased export value to the increase in prices. In reality, he noted that the processors have been incurring losses on their revenues due to the strengthening of the peso. "For every $100,000 worth of seaweed exports, we incur a revenue loss of P1 million," Dakay said.

To survive, he said, the processors have to increase their selling price while half have to source their raw material from Indonesia.

In 2007 alone, five seaweed processors—Dahon Dagat Inc., King Agro-Marine Products, Geltech Hayco Inc., Philippine Carrageenan and Natum Corp.—have stopped operations.

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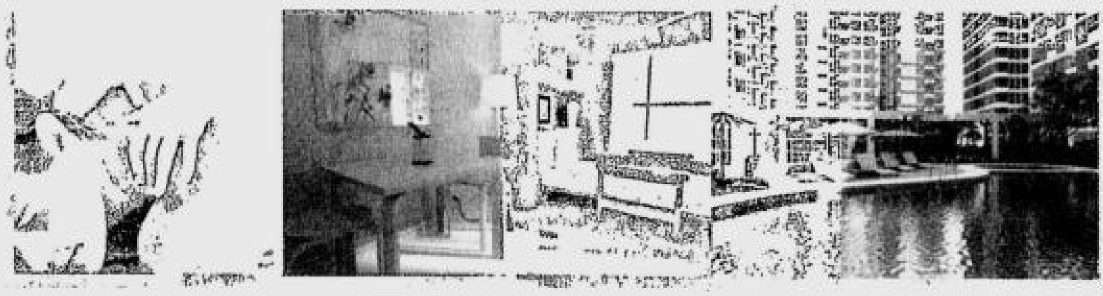

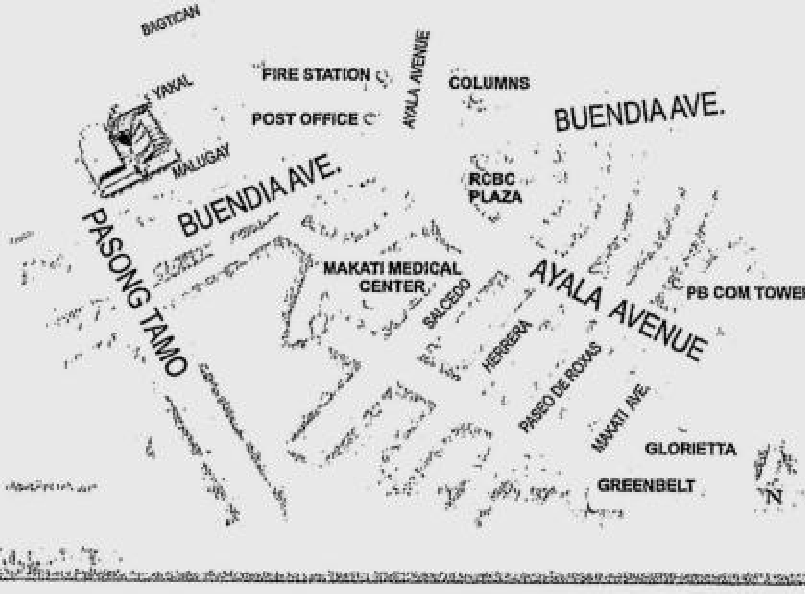

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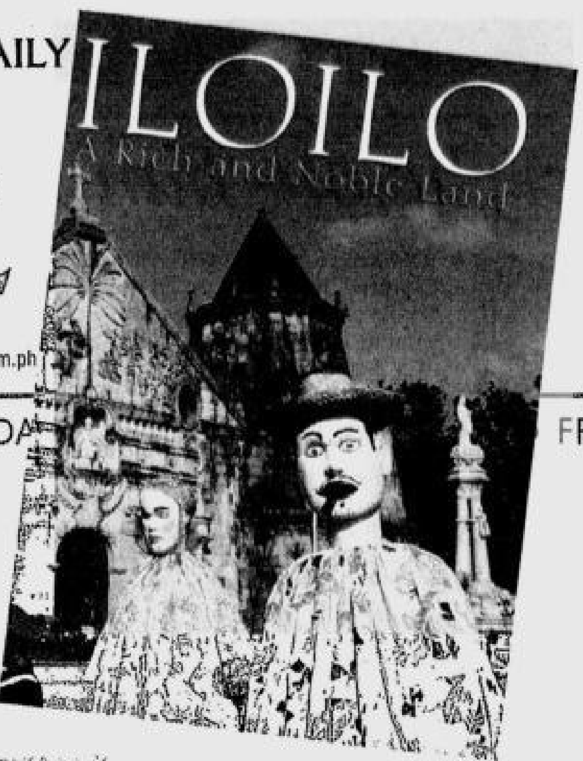
PRIDE OF PLACE
Augusto Villalon

Layers of Ilonggo reality



To really know Iloilo today, peel back the multiple layers of architecture, bad architectural facelifts and urban blight for the surprise of your life

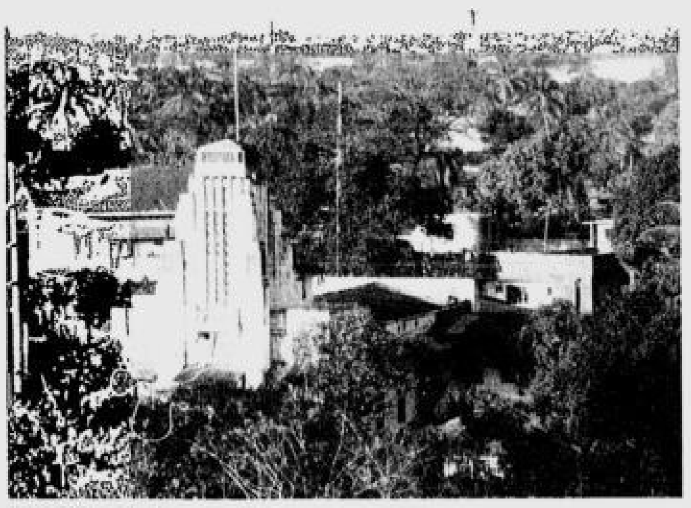
THE BOOK, "ILOILO, A RICH and Noble Land," launched last week by the Lopez Group Foundation, uncovers the province's agricultural, civic and social history that interweave to form the multi-layered Ilonggo reality that gives the province and its people such a strong identity.

Ask any Filipino and he will tell you that Iloilo is unlike any other place in the country. She is one of the few places in the Philippines with an identity and image distinct from that of any other province.

Filipinos know Iloilo as the gentle, genteel land of smiles, imagining Iloilo days as unfolding graciously and moving in measured choreography of the *rigodón*, the outdated, stylized dance ritual highlighting each glittering *baile* (ball) in moneyed mansions.

Fiesta mode is what Filipinos imagine Iloilo life to be most of the time: laid-back, peaceful, refined and always celebratory.

Another layer of Ilonggo reality overlaps the celebratory layer. Hard-working Ilonggos are vigorously entrepreneurial.



JARO Municipal Building (now police station) is a glorious Jazz Age Art Deco-style monument to the exuberance of the Philippine Commonwealth in Iloilo.

In Iloilo, the moneyed and working classes join in business activities that uphold the province as a vital national economic force, a position first attained with the surge of the sugar industry during the later years of the Spanish colonial era.

The Manila Daily Bulletin reported in September 1907 that the City of Iloilo was "the metropolis of the Visayan Islands, [the] second city of importance in the archipelago and the greatest market for sugar in this part of the world."

Sugar put Iloilo on the map. In the 1850s, Nicholas Loney, a British merchant, settled there and "fostered the opening up of the sugar lands of Panay and Negros." Loney introduced new technology, improved yield, and improved the quality of Iloilo sugar to world-market standards.

Unrivaled

For many years Iloilo prosperity was unrivaled, reaching a peak when the irritating delay and occasional damage to cargo caused by transshipment of sugar through the Port of Manila was finally bypassed, and from 1865 produce was exported directly to international points from Iloilo.

"The condition of business in Iloilo largely depends on the size of the sugar crop and the price of the staple," further reported the Manila Daily Bulletin in 1907. When the sugar trade boomed, so did Iloilo. Now known

LAYERS/ C2

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BPI Express

Time. Somehow there's never enough. As everyone knows, time is money, and minutes matter. So the last thing you want is to spend time on routine tasks like banking. Just *thinking* about the lines – from the payday ATM rush to the long wait for the teller – can be stressful.

Even more stressful is not knowing how to do your transactions using the phone or the computer at the bank - it makes you wish someone took the time to help you figure things out. And when you want to consult about getting a loan or financial advice, you feel like everyone's listening in on what you're saying - the bank just doesn't seem private enough to talk about such matters.

But fret no more, Bank of the Philippine Islands has come up with a friendly solution–its newest branch type called BPI Express, now in more locations nationwide.

When you enter a BPI Express branch, you are immediately greeted by its friendly, clean and modern interior design.

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From the moment you enter the stylish, not-so-bank-looking bank, you notice the difference. The sunny decor, relaxed yet fast-moving mood and even the helpful, friendly BPI Express Counselors make it feel more like a boutique than a bank.

The BPI Express consultation area is designed to help keep financial discussions with clients strictly private and confidential.

Basic transactions are quick and easy with the BPI Express Electronic Banking zone.

There you'll find BPI Express Teller ATMs, a phone for BPI Express Phone and a computer to access BPI Express Online. Plus, a BPI Express Services Counselor is there to help you every step of the way. Once you learn how to do it, you can do your banking from the comfort of your home or your office.

BPI Express has friendly tellers on hand for your other transactions.

BPI Express caters to simple routine transactions, so lines at the tellers are short. Think of the whole branch as a supermarket Express Lane - a fast lane designed to move you through quickly and more pleasantly.

But the "Express" isn't just about speed; it's also about expression. Just tell us what you need, and we'll help you find it – not standing at a counter, but in the privacy and comfort of a personal workstation. Here, BPI Express Sales Counselors can give you simple, practical advice on loans, investments, financial planning and other money matters.

Our tellers are ready to assist you with your simple, routine transactions. That's why lines are shorter and transactions are faster.

BPI Express offers private financial consultations.

So, if you want to have more control over your time and get friendly, fast service, come and visit the nearest BPI Express branch. You might just be surprised at how quick — and pleasant your banking experience could be.

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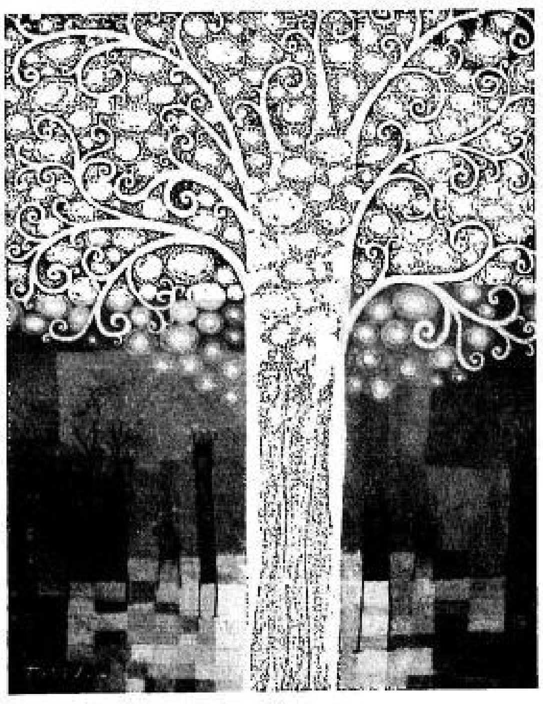
Tejido's acrylic-on-'banig' paintings

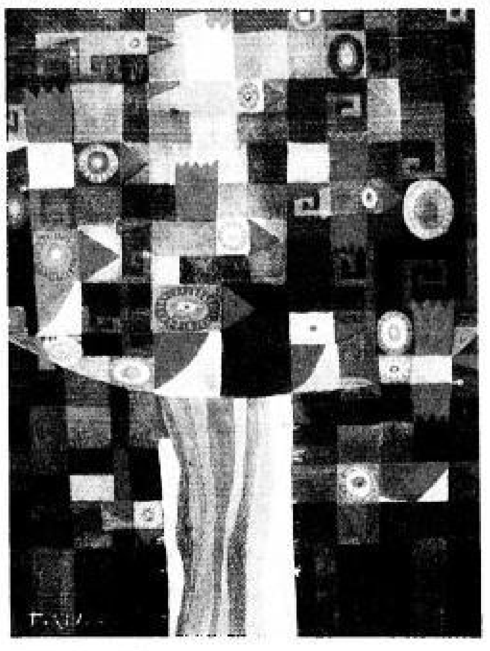

"WEARING Captured Stars"

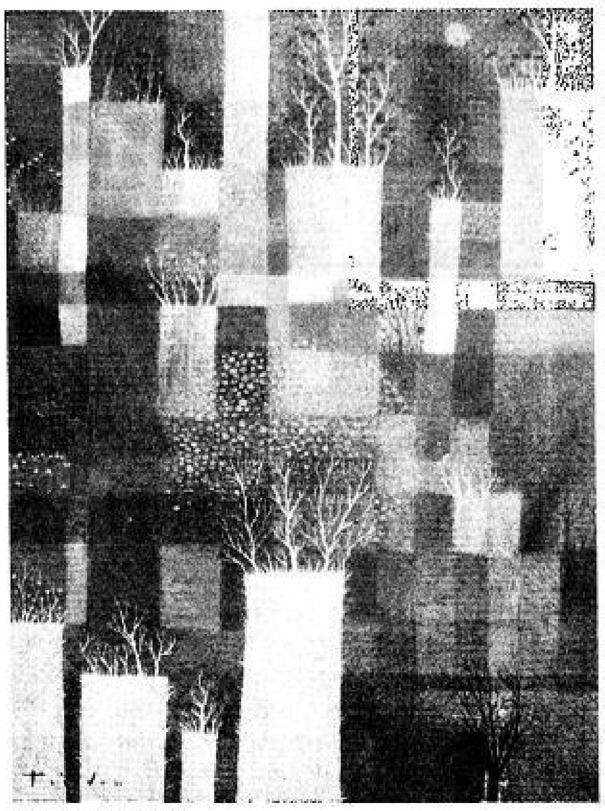
JOMIKE TEJIDO'S "THE TREE THAT Captured the Stars" is an exhibit of acrylic-on-*banig* (handwoven mats) paintings until Nov. 26 in 1/L of Gallery, 2/L, Serendra (across Market! Market!), Bonifacio Global City, Taguig (tel. 9013152).

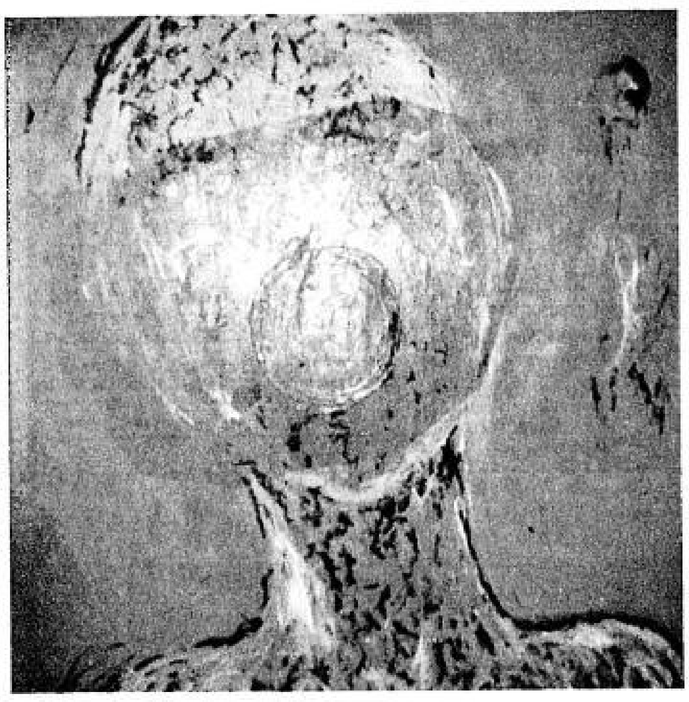
The exhibit is about a persistent dreamer amid a lush forest, entangled with success, failure, hope and despair that all come along in life. Through a symbolic short story and vivid paintings for all ages, the tree personifies how one can live out multi-hued dreams and grow with genuine purpose and meaning.

Tejido's paintings have an intricate texture. Their opaque medium seals the pores and in-between weaves. A finishing glaze locks in the pigments, acts as a tough fixative, and gives a film of protective luster for years of appreciation.

Tejido, well-known as a children's book artist, is an Architecture graduate from the University of Santo Tomas.

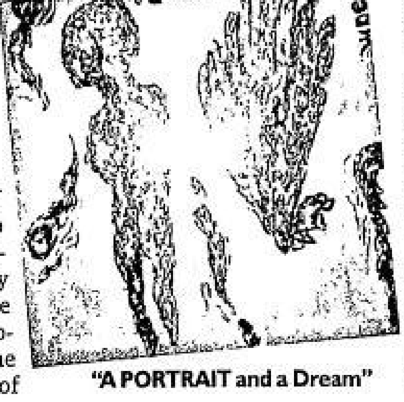

"THE FLOCK"


"MY DEAR Fruit"


"THE SCREAM" 2

In the mind's eye

By Constantino C. Tejero

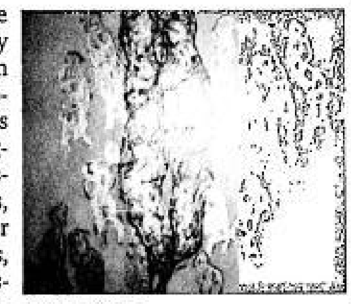

"A PORTRAIT and a Dream"

WHEN YOU SAY your dream is so vivid, you're actually referring to the intensity of the experience, how the dream has stirred up the emotion or been retained in the mind—but not the clarity of the image.

It is this idea that we think Henri Cainglet is trying to articulate and depict in his exhibit "A Portrait and a Dream," pieces in acrylic on canvas, until Nov. 30 in Le Soufflé @ Top of the Citi, 34/F, Citibank Tower, Paseo de Roxas, Makati.

Rendered in near-monochrome of brown, orange, ochre, red, and washes of pale green and blue, the pieces verge between abstraction and figuration. The viewer can make out shapes but they're fuzzy or blurred.

Here the artist is actually quite realistic in trying to capture the images of dream: irregular forms, mysterious shapes, faceless or masked figures, various gestures, ambiguous movement. Because the dream state is mostly perception.


"THE KISS"

Cainglet says heroes and villains constantly appear in his dreams, with their faces "familiar from afar but really unknown when up close."

In these pieces, we recognize a few, but we're not sure. In "Superman in the City," it is, of course, the Man of Steel, as we've been so assured by the title. But by the way Cainglet has rendered the caped superhero, it could be an angel on the wing over the rooftop, or a fashion model spreading a caftan on the catwalk.

"The Scream" 1-2 inevitably reference the iconic Munch painting, but the head has scarcely a feature, no eyes, no nose, except for the O of the mouth. As such the twin pieces evoke the anxiety of the Munch painting as well as the terror on the face of Francis Bacon's portrait of Pope Innocent X.

"The Kiss" could be alluding to Gustav Klimt's painting, or Rodin's and Brancusi's sculptures of the same title. The multiple images appear to be replicating the posture of Klimt's lovers, though. But then again we can't be sure.

In "City Dwellers," we don't see the people or their dwellings, but we do get the impression of congestion, of hustle and bustle, of teeming life.

"Festive Mood" 1-2, each a triptych, have silhouettes of human figures, but they could be rock formations or branches of corals. They're more a portrayal of movement, perhaps the energy of the dance.

More problematic is the eponymous piece "A Portrait and a Dream." This one purports to be a portrait but there is none here that reveals anything by way of recognizable physiognomy. A portrait of what? We can only trace shapes of a tadpole, four spermatozoids and a peacock.

Of such stuff are dreams made. And Cainglet is truly astute in recreating the sense of ambiguity of both vision and feeling of the dreamer.

Layers of Ilonggo reality

From page C1

as the Queen City of the South, roads and infrastructure were laid out, hospitals and schools opened.

In 1907, Iloilo was no backwater. "Iloilo has an electric-light plant and the city is well-lighted. There is also an ice factory and cold-storage plant. Among the possibilities of the near future are an up-to-date telephone system and streetcar line connecting all parts of the city.

One institution Iloilo can boast of, that might well be copied in other parts of the archipelago, [is] an up-to-date department store, Hoskyns & Company, a British firm, was established in 1868. In their large store on Calle Real can be found a complete stock of goods at prices, for the most part, far below Manila prices."

Iloilo prosperity was on the rise and the grand planter lifestyle had to be lived in worthy surroundings. Mansions were witness to the opulent moneyed lifestyle that has now all but died out due to 21st-century economic and social realities.

Mansions built on generous plots of land in quiet pre-World War II outskirts were swallowed up without warning by rapid, unregulated urban growth. Now finding themselves situated on valuable city center properties, mansion owners have been forced to reevaluate their properties and lifestyles.

Some downsized to smaller houses, renting out their mansions to commercial tenants. Others built rental buildings on their front lawns to generate additional income, hiding their mansions behind a layer of nondescript commercial structures built right along the street, changing the streetscape forever.

A few simply abandoned their mansions. The postwar years saw many of the moneyed Ilonggos moving out of their downtown mansions into smaller houses.

Mobility, dignity

Today's middle- and working-class homes, smaller and more modest, reflect lifestyle conditions of a majority of Iloilo City residents. Instead of projecting stability and gentility as the old mansions once did, the aura of the middle-class neighborhood is mobility, dignity, work and a strong sense of community.

Unlike the genteel streets of the moneyed class where nobody is seen outside of their fenced gardens, streets in middle- and working-class districts fill with everyday life. Residents live their lives on the street.

The local barangay hall spills out into the street, bringing governance to the people level, as it were. The street is where men hang out, drink or play basketball tournaments. The street is a social center, where the overflow of guests at a neighborhood christening, wedding or funeral is seated.

On the other hand, the rural landscape, dotted with *bahay-kubo* clustered in barrios and agricultural land, tells another story. To Filipinos, the *bahay-kubo* are generic, and the Ilonggo house is no exception. But the high level of outstanding bamboo craftsmanship sets the humble Ilonggo *kubo* far above the typical and generic.

For many generations, Ilonggo craftsmen embroider not with needle and thread but with bamboo. Their bamboo work achieves a play of texture by mixing peeled and unpeeled strips or combining dyed and natural-colored strips handwoven into repeating diamond patterns for the "lowly" *sawali* matting.

WORLD Heritage inscribed-Miag-ao church backdrops dancing *higantes* during a town festival.

Bamboo sections are scored, flattened and framed for wall panels. They are cut into slats for above-the-ground flooring and stripped into ribbons thin enough for weaving. Absolutely amazing are bamboo slat patterns, grilles of most delicately plaited bamboo lacework executed in fine, hand-embroidery quality.

Ilonggo architectural bamboo craftsmanship, totally unknown and unappreciated, is naïf Ilonggo folk art at its finest.

Iloilo bamboo houses, solid but fragile, enclosed but transparent, embody the observation that the Philippine *bahay-kubo* is in essence a "basket for living."

Romantic view

There exists a romantic view of downtown Iloilo remaining in a time warp, woven around blocks of superlative, intact 1920s-'40s commercial structures, heritage that gives Iloilo one of the most elegant business areas in the country.

What a graceful, outstanding heritage ensemble, it is probably the best, most extensive remaining collection of heritage commercial buildings in the country.

Buildings of the same height, size and of similar design line streets, a rare but vanishing example of urban unity of architectural scale and style in the Philippines. Building layouts are similar—shophouse-type, two-story rental spaces connected by an arcaded sidewalk.

The style of embellishment indicates the date of construction. Structures from the 1920s are decorated in the feminine, lacy Iloilo wedding-cake style.

The next generation of buildings designed in Art Deco geometry of the 1930s is followed by a post-World War II generation of structures in the robust, no-nonsense 1950s International Style.

Not all downtown buildings in Iloilo are of heritage quality. New shopping destinations coexist with the traditional stores that have always been in the city center, heightening the commercial counterplay between old and new.

An architectural "read" reveals the Iloilo story. A walk through Iloilo today reveals so much more to the city behind the scenes.

Behind a generic-looking commercial building may stand a grand old mansion. Step back (if Iloilo traffic won't run you over) to discover that a covered sidewalk is part of a sagging heritage commercial building, a redoubtable dowager whose better days can once again be relived after a simple nip-and-tuck operation.

Heritage surprises

To really know Iloilo today, one must look beyond the overlapping layers of decay, congestion, chaotic architecture and pockets of wealth existing almost side by side with pockets of poverty. Peel back the multiple layers of architecture, bad architectural facelifts and urban blight for the surprise of your life.

Layer after forgotten layer of the Iloilo story comes to view. Uncover revealing evidence about the city and what her people were like, culturally, socially and economically during key epochs of Iloilo city's rich history.

Walk the downtown area to the point of sensory overload. Suddenly come to the old, majestic Customs House by the Iloilo River, a monument to the former Queen City of the South.

Around the corner, step farther back to a vanishing era. Find a Spanish colonial-era warehouse where young women still twine abaca strands by hand into rope as they have done for centuries.

Iloilo is at a cusp. The city has to deal with the ill effects of progress, traffic, congestion, uncontrolled development, urban sprawl from the conversion of neighboring agricultural land into middle-class subdivisions.

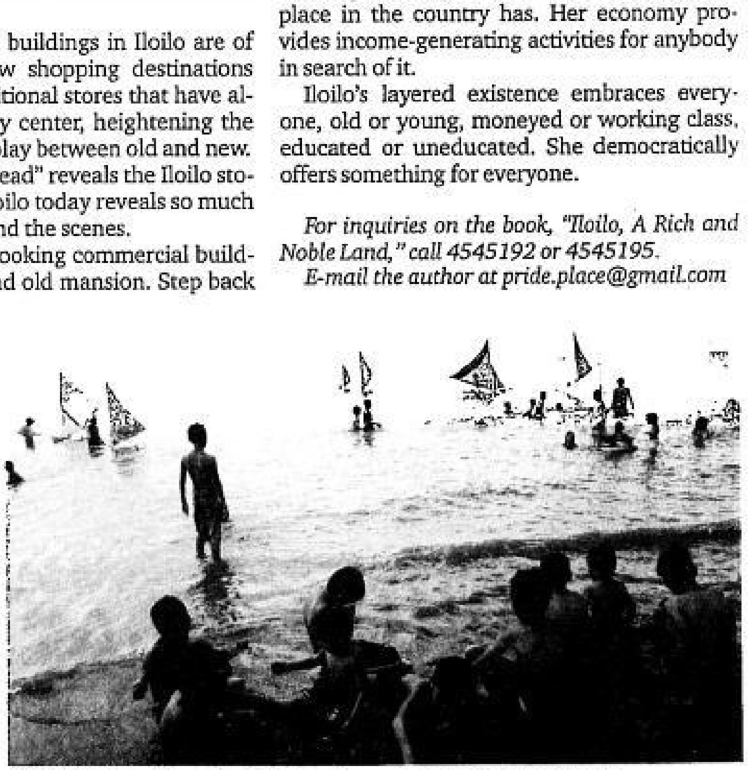
The age of super modernization has set in. Iloilo now boasts of a mix of heritage architecture; modern buildings; up-to-date malls; new inner city and suburban land developments; and, at long last, a brand-new state-of-art airport in neighboring Canatuan.

Iloilo is alive. Nothing is dormant about her. History and heritage anchor her. They give her an image so singular and unique that no other place in the country has. Her economy provides income-generating activities for anybody in search of it.

Iloilo's layered existence embraces everyone, old or young, moneyed or working class, educated or uneducated. She democratically offers something for everyone.

For inquiries on the book, "Iloilo, A Rich and Noble Land," call 4545192 or 4545195.
E-mail the author at pride.place@gmail.com

TRADITIONAL craftsmanship lives on in Iloilo.


ILONGGO youths enjoy the island bounty of their place of birth.

Malang, Cruz and Caña at Alliance Française

ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE DE MANILLE is holding "Curves," the joint exhibit of nudes by top artists Malang, Cris Cruz and Caña.

The exhibit runs until Dec. 3 at the Alliance Total Gallery (209 Nicanor Garcia St., formerly Reposo St., Bel-Air 2, Makati; tel. 8957585).

Following is the artists' statement:

Since time immemorial, the human figure has been inspiring artists from all over the world. We are no exception. Whether we make use of live models or reference photographs, rendering the human form continues to challenge us with the many intricacies that it presents.

That we have chosen to depict nudes makes this endeavor far more thought-provoking. The difficulty lies in achieving that delicate balance of light and shadow along with the corresponding proportions to create a likeness that truly highlights the curves of the body.

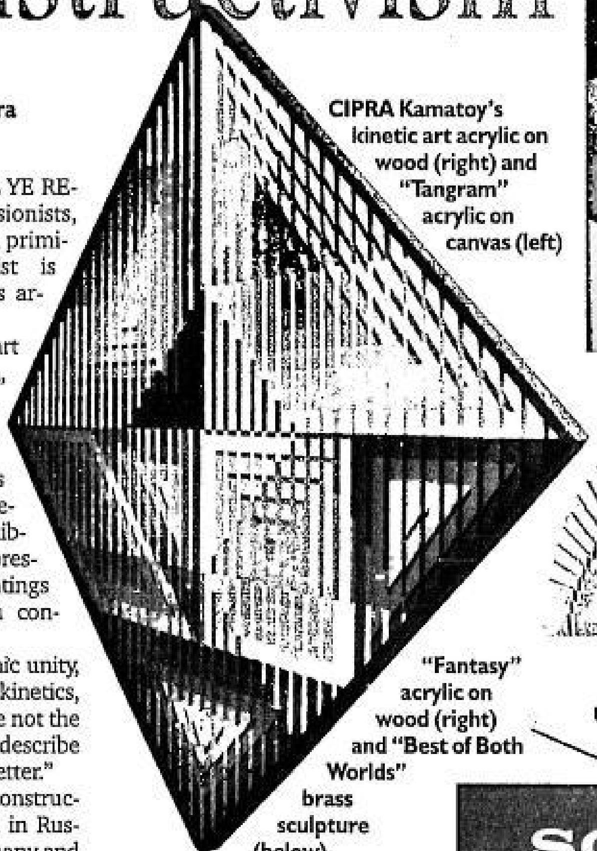
An added dimension to this exercise is the convergence of three different styles. Given the varying approaches that each of us have pursued as individual artists, the dilemma lies in whether to translate the image as a reflection of our personal styles or to break away and render the female figures as close to reality as possible.

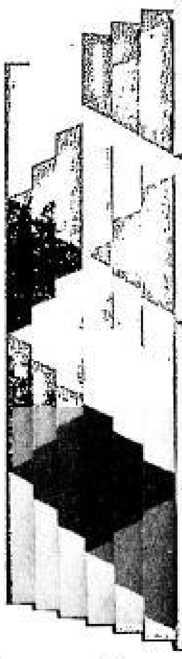
Finally, while the female form is the focus of this exhibition, "Curves" is also a celebration of friendship. This show marks the first time that the three of us are exhibiting together. With God's grace, we hope that this would not be the last.

CIPRA KAMATOY

Master of constructivism

By Sylvia Mendez Ventura
Contributor





CIPRA Kamatoy's kinetic art acrylic on wood (right) and "Tangram" acrylic on canvas (left)

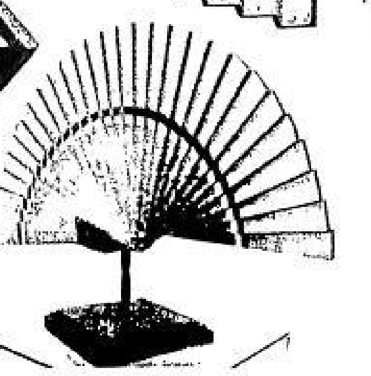
MAKE WAY, ALL YE REalists, impressionists, expressionists, primitivists. A constructivist is coming. In fact she has arrived.

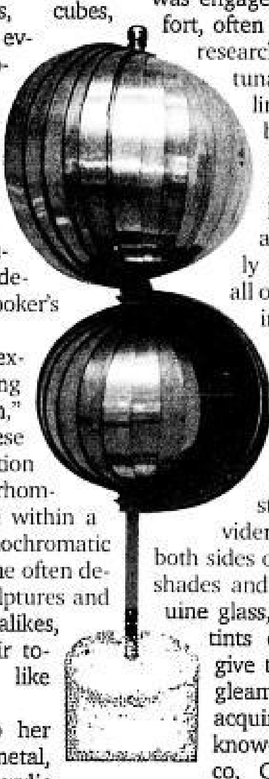
Dr. Cipra Kamatoy's art gallery, Museo ni Cipra, will be inaugurated on Dec. 1, 11 a.m., in Alaminos, Laguna, in a compound that contains four buildings she designed and built. The exhibit will showcase her impressive collection of paintings and sculptures done in constructivist style.

Marked by architectonic unity, balance, symmetry, and kinetics, Cipra's abstract works are not the kind that viewers would describe as "what my cat can do better."

Constructivist art, or constructivism, which originated in Russia and migrated to Germany and the US, is the formal organization of planes and the expression of volume by means of modern industrial materials such as glass, plastic, steel, and other metals.

Cipra's constructivism evolved independently from that of her foreign counterparts. Hers is strictly home-grown—innate, as it were—having developed chiefly from her formal lessons in architecture and her absorption in the work of the carpenters who built her first house.





"Fantasy" acrylic on wood (right) and "Best of Both Worlds" brass sculpture (below).

Her masterpieces are criss-crossing arrangements of squares, rectangles, circles, cubes, spheres, pyramids, every conceivable geometric shape in an infinite number of positions—upside down and right side up, spiraling clockwise and counterclockwise, undulating left and right, depending on the onlooker's angle of vision.

A noteworthy example is her painting entitled "Tangram," based on a Chinese puzzle, a configuration of five triangles, a rhomboid, and a square within a square, in monochromatic shades of brown. She often designs her metal sculptures and paintings as lookalikes, displaying each pair together intimately, like identical twins.

Some years ago her crucifixes in metal, stained glass, and acrylic on canvas earned her the title Outstanding Solo Exhibitor in the lobby of the Philippine Heart Center. She has also exhibited at the Ayala Museum.

Mentored by Bitanga

She was mentored in the fine arts by abstractionist Charito Bitanga, who encouraged her to show her work to the public before someone else beat her to it.

Cipra's angular backgrounds on canvas are often softened by petals and leaves rendered in representational mode. Her detailed wickerwork (sulihiya), a striking geometric pattern in itself, sets off assorted flowers and foliage in the foreground. Her expertise in decorative painting shows in the upholstery of her chairs and in the table napkins that match the patterns in her china.

She lays her canvas flat on the base of a lazy susan which she spins around as she applies her colors to her patterns. One would expect such meticulousness to slow her down; instead, at age 80, she works incessantly, while not engrossed in dentistry, house building, furniture making, interior design, cuisine, underwriting, and composing music. Her CD, "Listen to My Memories," will provide mood music during her opening.

Forty years ago, when she was already a furniture maker, Cipra completed all the academic requirements for a degree in architecture except her thesis. Her group members, with whom she was engaged in the design of a fort, often visited her clinic for research assistance. Unfortunately, her time was limited by her primary business of pulling teeth (at five pesos per extraction). Her lack of a diploma in architecture is the only thing she regrets. In all other pursuits, including memorial-park counseling, her achievements have been remarkable.

Some of Cipra's specialties in interior design are stained-glass room dividers (with artwork on both sides of each panel), lampshades and chandeliers of genuine glass, and staircases. The tints on her glass pieces give them the translucent gleam of kapis shells. She acquired her stained-glass know-how in San Francisco, California, during a nine-hour crash course that normally takes three weeks.

Constructivism is the root of her fascination with stairs. Four children of a friend of hers had already fallen from their stairs; before the fifth could come tumbling after, their mother asked Kamatoy to design a safe staircase. The lady's husband scoffed, "If your architect failed in his design, why should your dentist succeed?" But this talented dentist proceeded with her design of fall-proof steps. No more bruises and bumps ever since.

Why do people think dentists are only good at drilling teeth? When Cipra ventured into house painting for the first time, a friend of the homeowner warned her, "*Dentista 'yan, hindi* house painter." But Cipra wielded her housepainter's brush with artistic flair, moving the doubter to eat her words.

E-mail the author at sventura@mydestiny.net.

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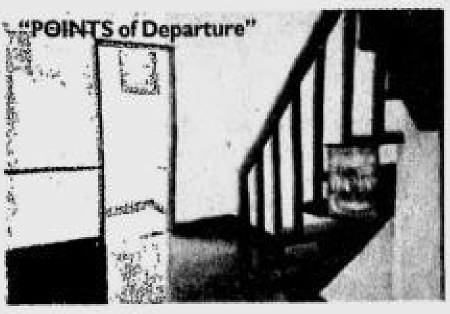

"POINTS of Departure"

Garcia at West

West Gallery (4/F Bldg. A, SM Megamall, tel. 6341284) presents "Points of Departure," featuring the latest paintings by Nona Garcia, until Dec. 4. Garcia looks into empty spaces, echoing ideas of impermanence, displacement and the transitory. Based on fellow artist Ringo Bunoan's photographs of empty apartments in Cubao, the works also investigate the idea of memory, capturing things left behind in spaces—which have already been abandoned and deserted.

Camacho at Mag:net

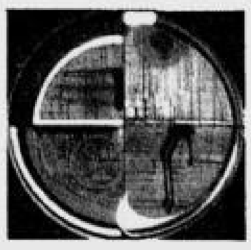
Mag:net Gallery (335 Agcor Bldg., Katipunan Ave., Loyola Heights, QC, tel. 9293191) presents Bea Camacho's "Conversion Factors," until Nov. 29. Camacho's work is grounded in logic and the rationality of calculations. These calculations are based on unknown mathematical constants—the constants that convert the feeling of separation into a crocheted cord, the fear of forgetting into a traceless sheet of paper, and the impulse to communicate into a white wall.

SARAH Orendain and her paintings

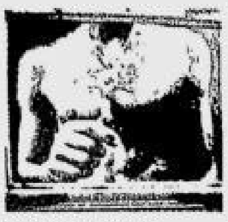
Orendain at Xavierville

Sarah Orendain presents her 25 acrylic and oil paintings in "Pasinaya," a celebration of the artist's life, Dec. 1, at Xavierville I Clubhouse, QC. Orendain is a student of Fernando Sena.

Aquilizan at Duemila



Alfredo Juan Aquilizan presents "Waterworks," until Dec. 4 at Galleria Duemila (210 Loring St., Pasay City, tel. 8319990/8339815). In this exhibit, Aquilizan returns to his roots of paintings or rather, the home of his heart. His paintings are in hues of gray with black and white and silver—reflecting the shorelines of the Queensland beaches, specifically the Sunshine Coast where he and his children go to spend time together.


"BLING Bling"

Bartolome at SM Art Center

Welbart Bartolome will exhibit "In My Place" on Dec. 16-Jan. 2 at the Art Center, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City. The exhibit will feature over 20 works including "Tseria (Homage to Gustav Klimt)," "Vanity" and "The Black Bride." Call 6320223.

FIVE top artists present "Dilop," until Nov. 30 at Asia Art Gallery, 2/F, SM Mall of Asia, Pasay City. The artists are Romulo Olazo, Raul Isidro, Julius Limpe, Al Perez and Fil Delacruz.

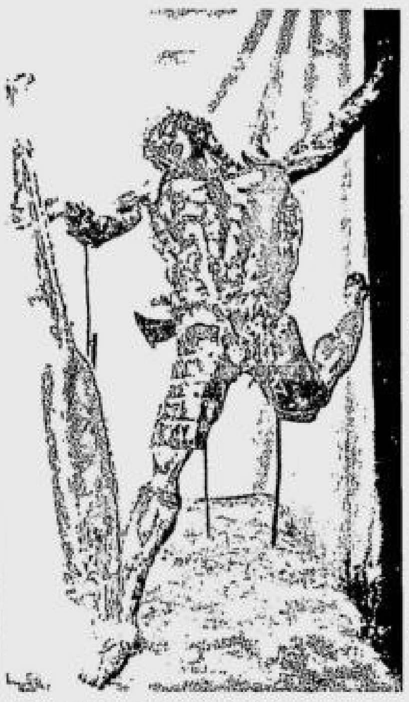
FERNANDO B. Sena Art Workshop features "Bagong Sibol '07," a group exhibit, Nov. 27-Dec. 2, at the 4/F, Cinema Lobby, Citywalk 2, Eastwood City, Libis, QC. Photo shows (front row, from left) Katha Villanueva, Christine Sena, Patricia Ocampo, Alexandra Descallar and Louise Dominguez; (second row) Isabella Flores, Alyanna Chio, Gabbi Reyes, Ma. Isabel Jimenez and Jessica Ocampo.

Shows at Nineveh, Laguna

Five art shows are set at Nineveh Artspace in Villa Silangan, Sta. Cruz, Laguna, until Dec. 18: "Pagitan" by Brenda Fajardo; "Ka-Araw-an" by Baglan; "Entablado" by Bayani Acala; "Solo Plight" by Joselito Jandayan," and "Kwentong Kutsero," by 10 young award-winning artists. Call (049) 8086617 or 09167720368.

Rayos del Sol at Nine

Danny Rayos del Sol presents his creative works on ostrich eggs in "Rayos del Sol Whimsy," an adventure in egg sculpture in Gallery Nine (Bldg. A., Art Center, SM Megamall, Mandaluyong City) starting Dec. 6. Over 20 ostrich sculpture pieces are cut and carved meticulously, each one different from the other, with subjects ranging from the religious to landscapes, geometric patterns, flora and fauna. Call 6877302 or 09178925536.

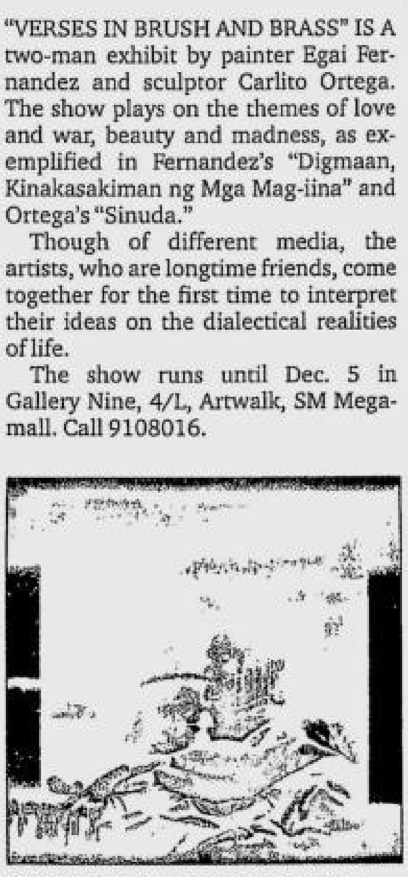

"SINUDA," by Carlito Ortega

Egai Fernandez and Carlito Ortega in duo show

"VERSES IN BRUSH AND BRASS" IS A two-man exhibit by painter Egai Fernandez and sculptor Carlito Ortega. The show plays on the themes of love and war, beauty and madness, as exemplified in Fernandez's "Digmaan, Kinakasakiman ng Mga Mag-iina" and Ortega's "Sinuda."

Though of different media, the artists, who are longtime friends, come together for the first time to interpret their ideas on the dialectical realities of life.

The show runs until Dec. 5 in Gallery Nine, 4/L, Artwalk, SM Megamall. Call 9108016.


"DIGMAAN, Kinakasakiman ng Mga Mag-iina," by Egai Fernandez

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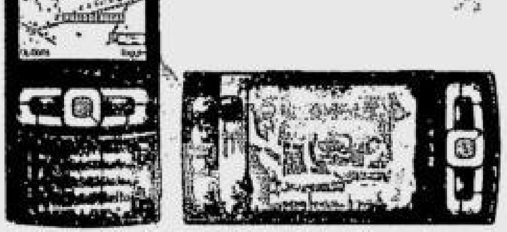

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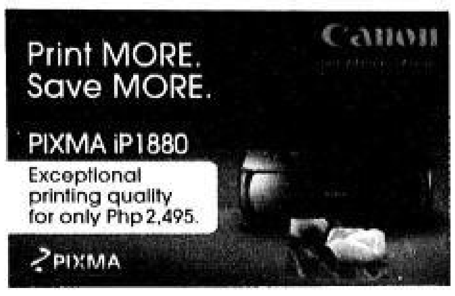
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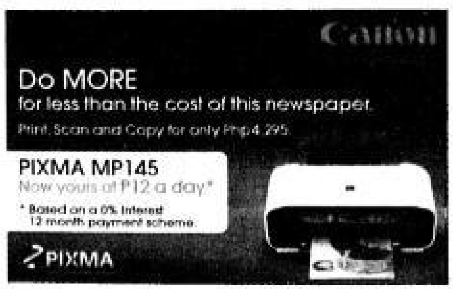
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St. Scholastica features Mariel y Juan, violin-piano duo

THE VIOLIN-PIANO duo partnership of Mariel Ilusorio and Juan Luis Muñoz was formed in 2005. Both artists have vast experience performing in Europe, South America and South Africa, where they're based. They have organized their own chamber music series at South Africa's Rhodes University, titled "Juan, Mariel and Friends." They teach and live in Grahamstown with their one-year-old daughter, Anita Mariel.

Ilusorio began playing the piano at an early age and continued her musical studies through various scholarships, earning her pre-college diploma from the Julliard School in New York and her bachelor of music from the Oberlin Conservatory in Ohio. She then traveled to Germany, where she studied in the Hanover State Academy, obtaining her masteral and doctoral degrees in Piano Performance. She lived there for 10 years. In 2000, she won first prize in the 9th Carlo Soliva International Music Competition in Italy.

Ilusorio regularly returns to the Philippines to do outreach concert tours and master classes. She has recorded two CDs of solo piano music.

Muñoz has lived in South Africa for the past 18 years, playing an active role in that country's musical life. Born in Santiago, Chile, he studied under Prof. Fernando Ansaldi and Prof. Sergio Prieto at the Catholic University of Santiago, Chile. There he was concert master of the University Symphony Orchestra. He toured Chile, Argentina and Peru, as soloist and concert master of the Mineduc orchestra. He moved to South Africa as sub-principal violinist of the Capab orchestra. He has performed in numerous concerts as leader of the Johannesburg Philharmonic Orchestra, Johannesburg Music Initiative and Cape Town Baroque Ensemble, which he founded.

The duo combines Muñoz's vast experience as a conductor and chamber musician, and Ilusorio's musical training and exceptional musicality. There is a unique union of different backgrounds and influences producing an exciting and artistic combination: Mariel y Juan.

The Battig Music Foundation presents "Mariel y Juan" on Nov. 29, 7 p.m., at St. Cecilia's Hall of St. Scholastica's College, Leon Guinto St., Malate, Manila. The concert's proceeds will be for the benefit of the St. Scholastica's music scholars. For inquiries, call 5268080.

VIOLIN-PIANO duo Mariel Ilusorio and husband Juan Luiz Muñoz

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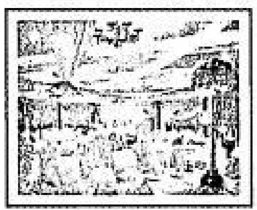

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Manila Cathedral to hold 2nd Pipe Organ Festival

THE MANILA CATHEDRAL-Basilica (MCB), the seat of the Archbishop of Manila and home to the biggest pipe organ in Southeast Asia, will be holding its second Pipe Organ Festival on Dec. 2, 5, 6, 8, and 10.

Msgr. Nestor C. Cerbo, rector of the MCB, said that the festival, solemn but celebratory, is liturgical in format, a way of concretizing MCB's role as the powerhouse of liturgical music in the Archdiocese of Manila and of bringing to public appreciation the wonderful sounds of the Church's magnificent musical instrument.

"Like what we did last year in the first staging of the event, this year's festival is open and free to the public, in much the same way as liturgical celebrations are done free of charge," Cerbo said.

"Performers at the occasion are the country's leading pipe organists, some of them a virtual institution by musical merits," he said.

Artists in the lineup are internationally acclaimed recitalist Armando Salarza; multi-awarded singer, composer, and conductor Alejando Consolacion II; choirmaster-conductor Armin Comon; and choirmaster and singer Crispin Añago.

ALEJANDRO Consolacion II

PETER Stapleton

ARMIN Comon

ARMANDO Salazar

Sure to fascinate the crowd are the stunning finger works and versatile musicianship of United Kingdom's Peter Stapleston. Holding a master's degree in music, Stapleton has been in the Philippines for over a year now, serving in a special stint as director of music for the British School in Manila.

The festival's choral concerts will feature the San Carlos Optimi Choir, University of the East Chorale, Comelec Chorale, and MCB's own weekday choir.

"With a good pipe organ, majestic melodies become a staple in our liturgical menu, and we envision the Manila Cathedral-Basilica to be the source and symbol of such sounds of wonderful splendor in the local Church," Cerbo said.

The Manila Cathedral Pipe Organ, idle and almost dead for 15 years due to its state of disrepair, was re-launched last December after being restored to its original form and function at the initiative of Cerbo.

The rehabilitation, done by the Diego Cera Organbuilders, cost P4.95 million, Cerbo said.

The pipe organ was originally built in 1958 by the Flemish organ firm, Pels & Sohn, its installation marked by an inaugural concert with world-acclaimed Belgian organist Flor Peters as performer.

With 70 stops, four manuals, and a pedal, the pipe organ has 5,500 pipes (flutes and trumpets) placed on seven major chests and supplied by 12 bellows and four electric blowers, all of which were either repaired or replaced to make the instrument a total reconstitution of the original.

"Quite a marvel in its magnificence and massiveness, and highly prized for its rich historical value, the MCB Pipe Organ is considered one of the country's cultural treasures and a telling liturgical trademark of this premier church of the Archdiocese of Manila," Cerbo said.

Ikaw lamang ang
Panginoong Hesukris
ng Espiritu
ng Ama
Amen
SAN Carlos Optimi Choir

CRISPIN Añago

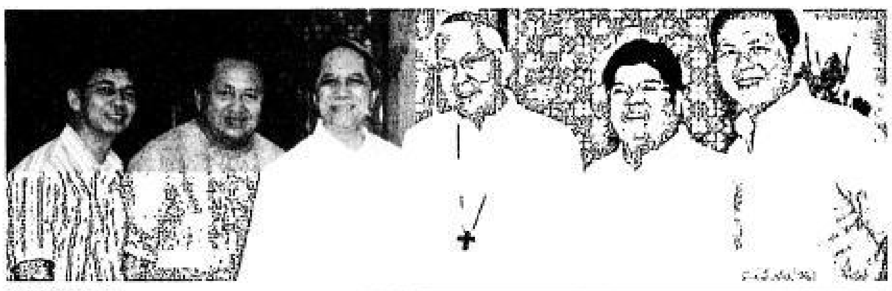
The new song, Misa Immaculada Concepcion, which will be launched at this year's festival, was composed by Alejandro as commissioned by the MCB.

"We hope that, with the example of this pioneering pipe organ festival product, more composers will be inspired to whip up new liturgical songs that are best sung with the pipe organ accompaniment."

The complete program of this year's festival:

1. Four Marian Songs concert–Dec. 2, 1:30 p.m.
2. Solemn Mass for the Cofradia de la Inmaculada–Dec. 2, 2 p.m.
   –With the soft launching of the new Composition, "Misa Immaculada Concepcion"
3. Triduum Masses with Recital–Dec. 5, 6, 7, 12:10 p.m.
4. Solemnity of Mary, the Immaculate Conception–Dec. 8, 12 noon
   –With grand launching of the new composition, "Misa Immaculada Concepcion"
5. Anniversary Mass–Dec. 10, 6 p.m.
6. Gala concert–Dec. 10, 7 p.m.

CARDINAL Rosales with Imelda Cojuangco and Cofradia board members


COMITE de Festejos with Cardinal Rosales, Armando Arionday, Ado Escudero, Danny Dolor, Allan Tengco and Clifford Chua

Traditional Marian procession on Dec. 2

ON ITS 28TH year, the Cofradia de la Inmaculada Concepcion will hold the annual grand Marian procession on the first Sunday of December to honor the Blessed Virgin Mary.

Scheduled on Dec. 2 at 4 p.m., the procession will be participated in by 60 carrozas bearing the different titles of Mary. The procession, held in cooperation with the Intramuros Administration, will be opened by Archbishop Diosdado Talamayan of Tuguegarao. The Armed Forces of the Philippines will precede the procession with a military parade from the Manila Cathedral to the streets of Intramuros.

NUESTRA Señora de Dolores de Turumba of Pakil, Laguna, is carried by devotees.

A Triduum of Masses will be held on Nov. 27 to 29 at 11:45 a.m. at the Manila Cathedral. The First Communion of 500 public school children will be held on Dec. 1 at 10 a.m., also at the Manila Cathedral, with Bishop Teodoro Bacani as celebrant.

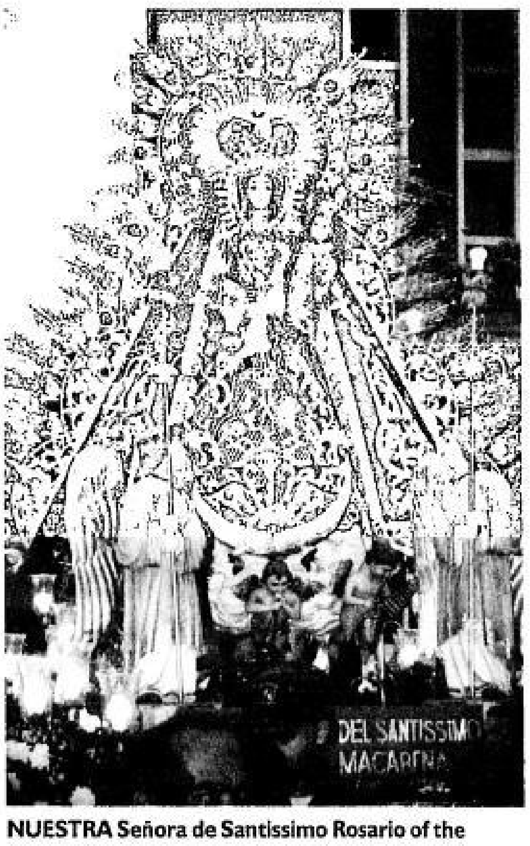
Hermanos mayores 2007 Estela Justiniani Lopez and Josefina "Pitang" Lopez-Tiongson will hold a concelebrated Hermana Mass on Dec. 2 at 2 p.m. with Lipa Archbishop Ramon Arguelles as main celebrant.

Expected to join the procession are the venerated images of the Immaculate Concepcion, Our Lady of Manaoag, Our Lady of La Naval, Our Lady of Piat of Cagayan Valley, Our Lady of Caysasay of Taal, Batangas, Our Lady of La Naval, Virgen de Los Remedios of Pampanga, Virgen de la Soledad de Porta Vaga of Cavite, Our Lady of Peñafrancia of Naga, Our Lady of Victory, Nuestra Señora del Rosario of Salinas, Cavite, among others.

The "comite de festejos" is composed of Conrado Escudero, chair; Jorge Allan Tengco, vice chair; Danilo Dolor, Armando Arionday, Carmelo Pablo Jr., Clifford Chua, members. The Cofradia officers are Imelda Cojuangco, founding chair; Danilo Dolor, vice chair; Aurora Eizmendi, president; Lourdes Castañeda, vice president; Ma. Victoria Tengco, treasurer; Fe Rodriguez, assistant treasurer, and Carmelo Pablo, secretary.

LA Divina Pastora of Gapan, Nueva Ecija

NUESTRA Señora de Navidad of the Villacorta family



NUESTRA Señora de Santissimo Rosario of the Azares family

OUR Lady of the Immaculate Conception

Eucharistic congress on Dec. 1

THE EUCHARISTIC ADORER'S League, the Holy Spirit Adoration Sisters (Pink Sisters) and the Saint Joseph Adoration Convent invite everyone to the 20th Eucharistic Congress on Dec. 1, 7 a.m.-5:30 p.m.

The theme for this year is in line with the latest encyclical by Pope Benedict XVI which explores the richness of the sacrament of the Eucharist. The lectures will be on the Pope's apostolic exhortation, "Sacramentum Caritatis."

Speakers include Fr. Apolinario Ty, SSS; Fr. Linuis Nicasio, SVD; Bishop Pablo David and Fr. Raul Caga, SVD. A concelebrated Mass to be presided by Bishop David will close the day.

Registration, free of charge, will start at 7 a.m. Families are invited.

San Beda Christmas concert

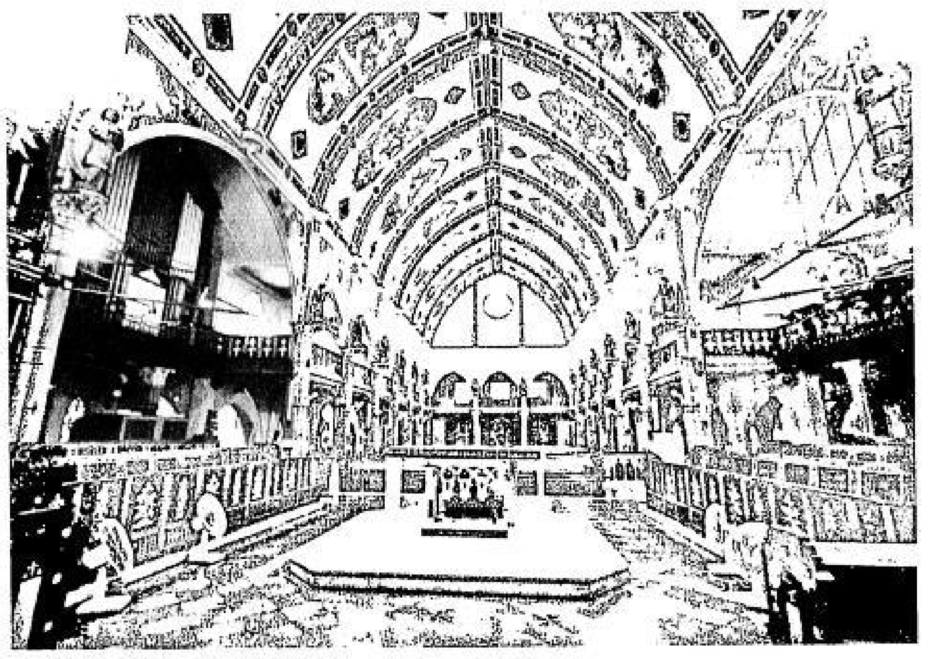
BIMBO Cerrudo, George Yang, Rodel Colmenar, Maricris Bermont and Rachelle Gerodias

THE BEDAN JUBILARIans of 2008, the San Beda College Alumni Foundation and the San Beda College Alumni Association, in cooperation with PLDT, Smart Communications, Megaworld Corp., San Miguel Corp. and Toyota Pasong Tamo, have organized an invitational Christmas concert at the Abbey Church of Our Lady of Montserrat, Mendiola, Manila.

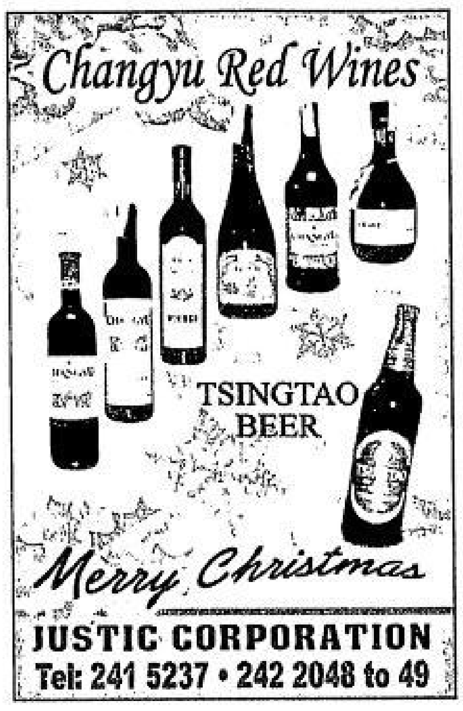
Dubbed "Adventus: A Christmas Concert," the event will be held on Dec. 11, 7 p.m. The musical concert will feature Bedan and businessman-singer George Yang, actor Calvin Millado, Maricris Bermont, Bo Cerrudo and soprano Rachelle Gerodias.

Also featured are the Manila Philharmonic Rhythm Orchestra under the baton of Rodel Colmenar and the UP Singing Ambassadors. Freddie Santos will direct this musical show.

Proceeds of the concert will be used for the rehabilitation of the historic Abbey Church of Our Lady of Montserrat; the construction of the SBC Taytay Athletes Quarters, and the scholarship program of the SBC Alumni Foundation. Patron concert tickets priced at P5,000 are now available at the Alumni Office. Call 7336131 or 7355995.



ABBEY Church of Our Lady of Montserrat



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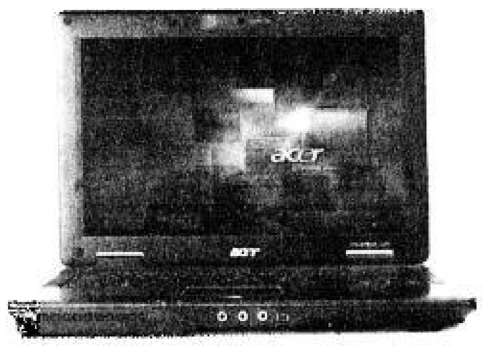

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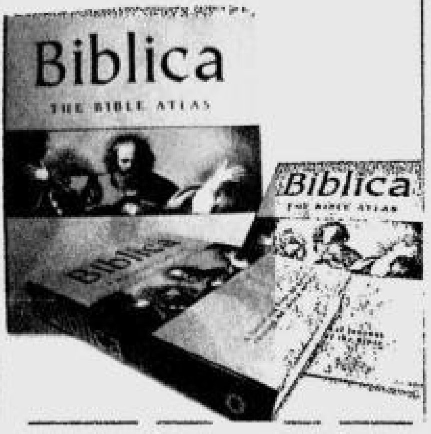

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Wellness, beauty and murder in latest Metro Society

METRO Society
Exclusive!
The Delgado Murder
The secrets of the family feud
Manila's top yoga gurus
In their best form ever
8 Beauty shrines of the privileged set
Plus:

THE THIRD ANNUAL HEALTH, wellness and Beauty issue of Metro Society out this month is packed with some of the most glamorous suggestions in pursuing the pampered life and staying in the best shape possible.

Cover personalities Tessa Prieto-Valdes, Diether Ocampo and a newly pregnant Mikee Cojuangco-Jaworski talk about their struggles and the discipline behind their athletic forms.

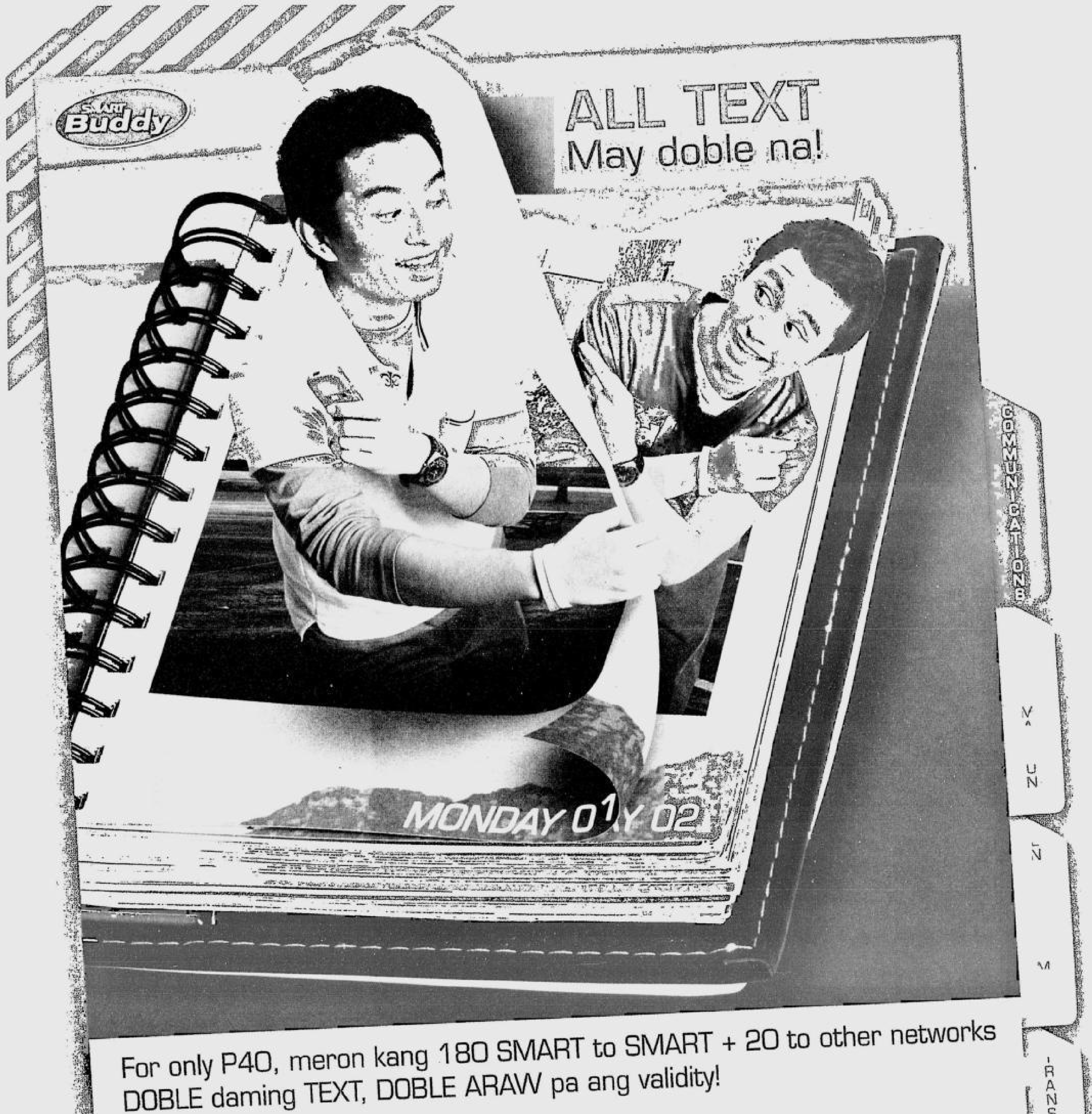
For Tessa, it was reaching the Big 4-0 three years ago that made her almost fitness-obsessed. For Diether, a strict exercise regimen assures him he can live up to his multi-faceted life. For Mikee, the realization that riding horses is the one thing that has kept her fit all these years—so why did she ever think of letting it go?

Part of the magazine's health and wellness package include profiles of three of Manila's most sought-after personal trainors; the best beauty salons in town that are more than just about haircuts and makeup; a portfolio of some of Manila's most dedicated yoga practitioners; and an interview with the only Filipino supermodel, Anna Bayle, who talks about the secrets to her fabulously maintained beauty.

Not all is pristine and glamorous, however, in the life of the privileged. Also in this issue, Metro Society meets the characters behind the celebrated murder case of Rico Delgado who was allegedly slain by his stepbrother Louie Gonzales in the former's own home last March.

Belonging to two of the most prominent families in business and society, the murder has served as rich fodder for society talk for months. Friends and family talk to the magazine about the Rico and Louie they knew, and reveal the secrets of the family feud that could have been the beginning of the bloody end.

Metro Society is the bimonthly society magazine from ABS-CBN Publishing and is available in newsstands and bookstores nationwide.



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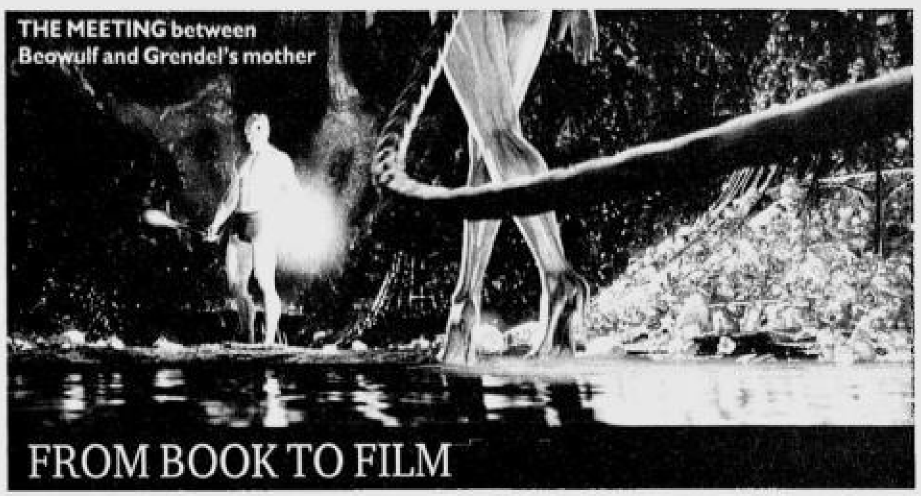

THE MEETING between Beowulf and Grendel's mother

FROM BOOK TO FILM

Beowulf myth in 3D

BEOWULF and Hrothgar

By Eldric Paul A. Peredo
Contributor

WHILE WE HAVE BEEN EXperiencing an onslaught of comic-book characters on the big screen, movie adaptations of heroic tales from classic literature (Shakespeare and others) or the brittle pages of history books (Frank Miller's Spartan tale, "300") remain attractive projects for filmmakers, chiefly for the timelessness of the stories and their appeal to a curious audience that for one reason or another didn't have time to read the text.

Of late, it has been the turn of the Anglo-Saxon epic poem "Beowulf" to be resurrected on the big screen, with director Robert Zemeckis using the performance-capture 3D technology he used for "The Polar Express."

BEOWULF/ E3

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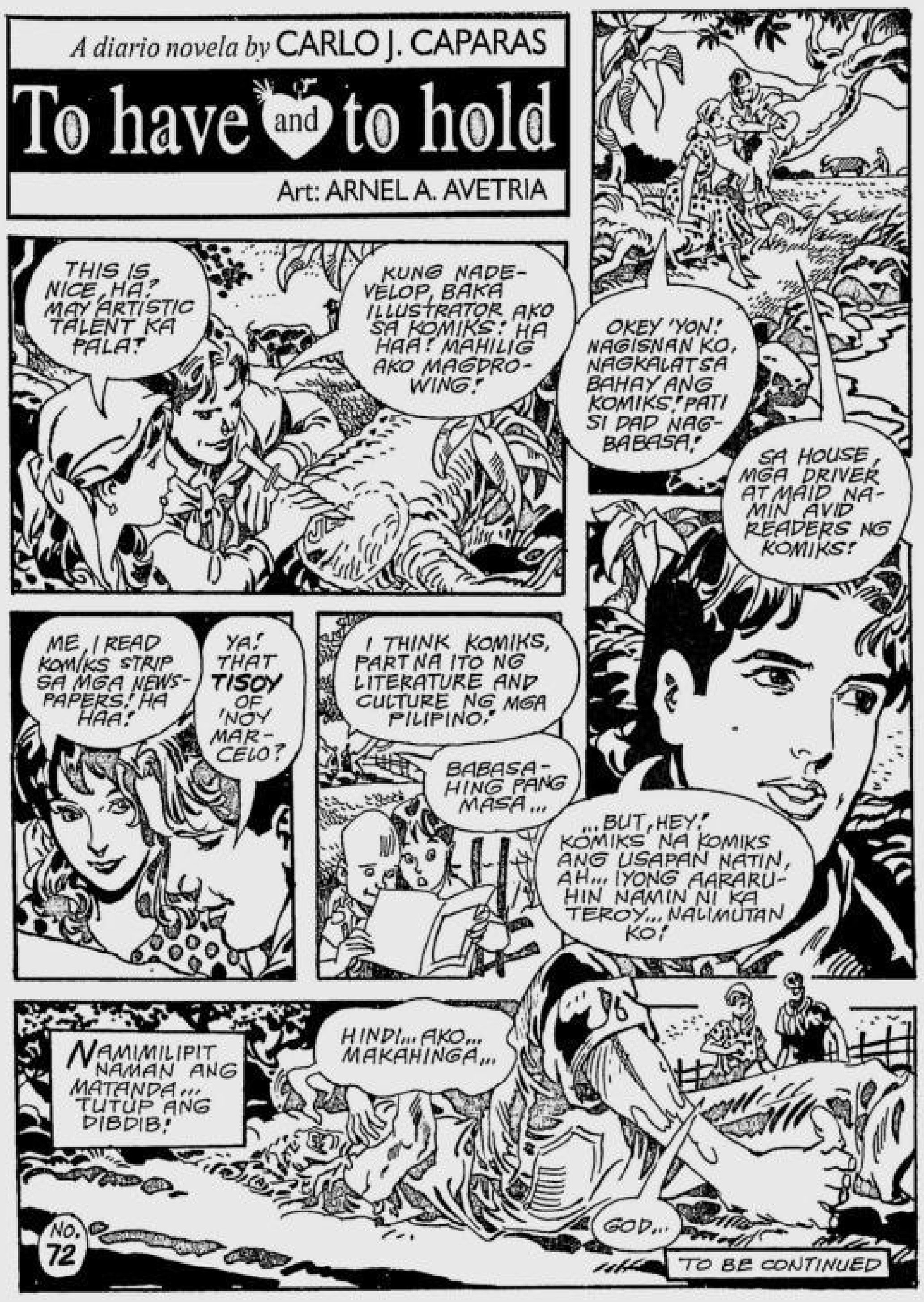
A diario novela by CARLO J. CAPARAS

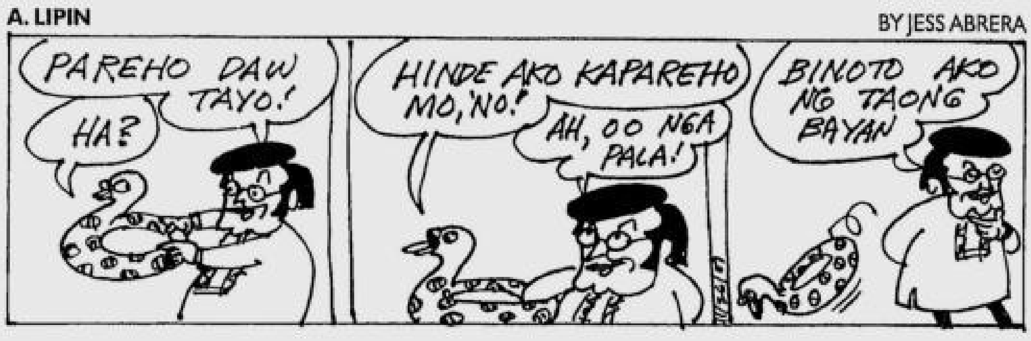
To have and to hold

Art: ARNEL A. AVETRIA


THIS IS NICE, HA? MAY ARTISTIC TALENT KA PALA!
KUNG NADE-VELOP, BAKA ILLUSTRATOR AKO SA KOMIKS! HA HAA! MAHILIG AKO MAGDRO-WING!
OKEY 'YON! NAGISNAN KO, NAGKALAT SA BAHAY ANG KOMIKS! PATI SI DAD NAG-BABASA!
SA HOUSE, MGA DRIVER AT MAID NA-MIN AVID READERS NG KOMIKS!
ME, I READ KOMIKS STRIP SA MGA NEWS-PAPERS! HA HAA!
YA! THAT TISOY OF 'NOY MAR-CELO?
I THINK KOMIKS, PART NA ITO NG LITERATURE AND CULTURE NG MGA PILIPINO!
BABASA-HING PANG MASA...
...BUT, HEY! KOMIKS NA KOMIKS ANG USAPAN NATIN, AH... IYONG AARARU-HIN NAMIN NI KA TEROY... NALIMUTAN KO!
NAMIMILIPIT NAMAN ANG MATANDA... TUTUP ANG DIBDIB!
HINDI... AKO... MAKAHINGA...
GOD...
NO. 72
TO BE CONTINUED

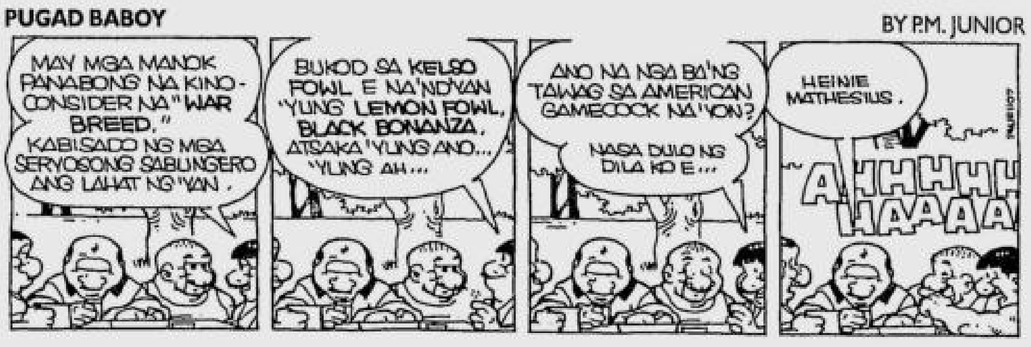
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


PAREHO DAW TAYO!
HA?
HINDE AKO KAPAREHO MO, NO!
AH, OO NGA PALA!
BINOTO AKO NG TAONG BAYAN

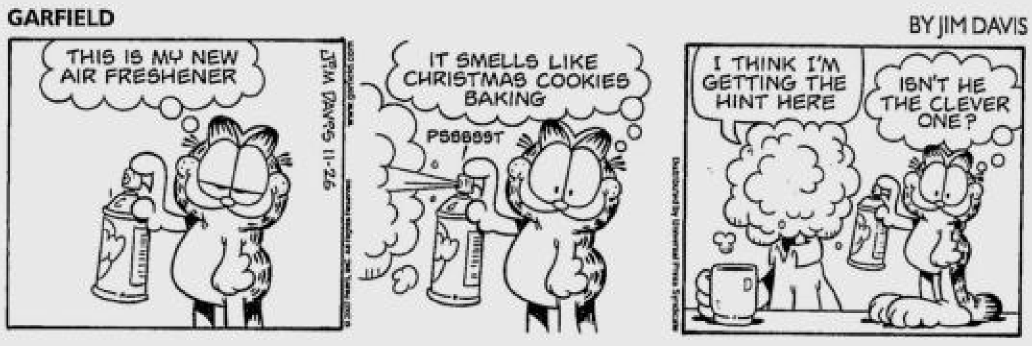
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


MAY MGA MANOK PANABONG NA KINO-CONSIDER NA "WAR BREED."
KABISADO NG MGA SERYOSONG SABUNGERO ANG LAHAT NG 'YAN.
BUKOD SA KELSO FOWL E NA'ND'YAN 'YUNG LEMON FOWL, BLACK BONANZA. ATSAKA 'YUNG ANO... 'YUNG AH...
ANO NA NGA BA'NG TAWAG SA AMERICAN GAMECOCK NA 'YON?
NASA DULO NG DILA KO E...
HEINIE MATHESIUS.
AHHHHH HAAAA

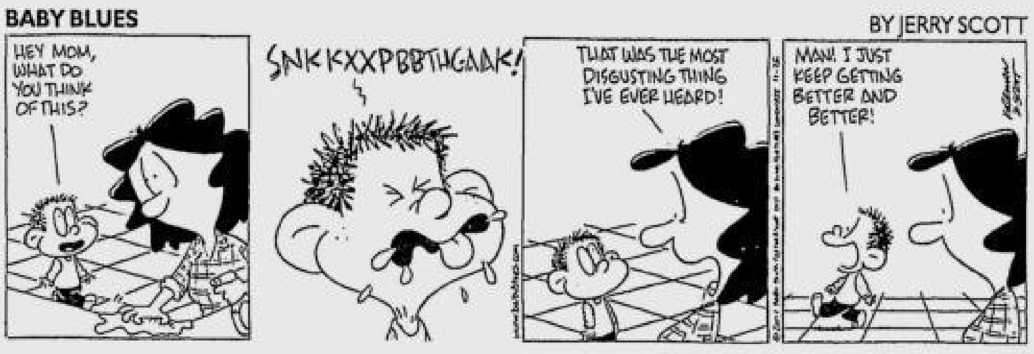
GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS


THIS IS MY NEW AIR FRESHENER
JIM DAVIS 11-26
IT SMELLS LIKE CHRISTMAS COOKIES BAKING
PSSSSST
I THINK I'M GETTING THE HINT HERE
ISN'T HE THE CLEVER ONE?

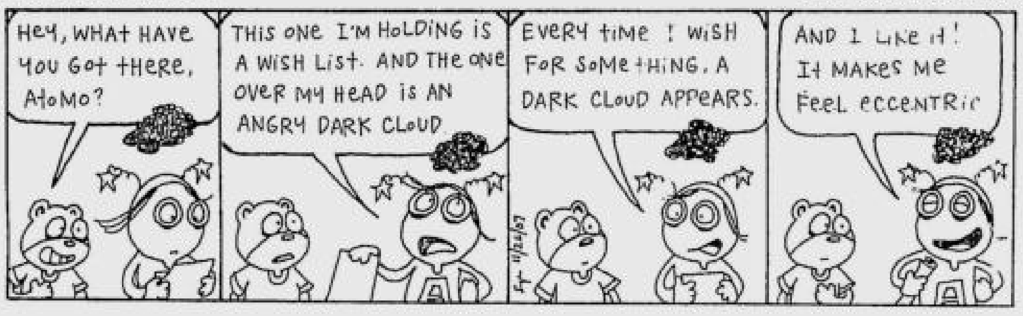
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


HEY MOM, WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THIS?
SNKKXXPBBTHGAAK!
THAT WAS THE MOST DISGUSTING THING I'VE EVER HEARD!
MAN! I JUST KEEP GETTING BETTER AND BETTER!

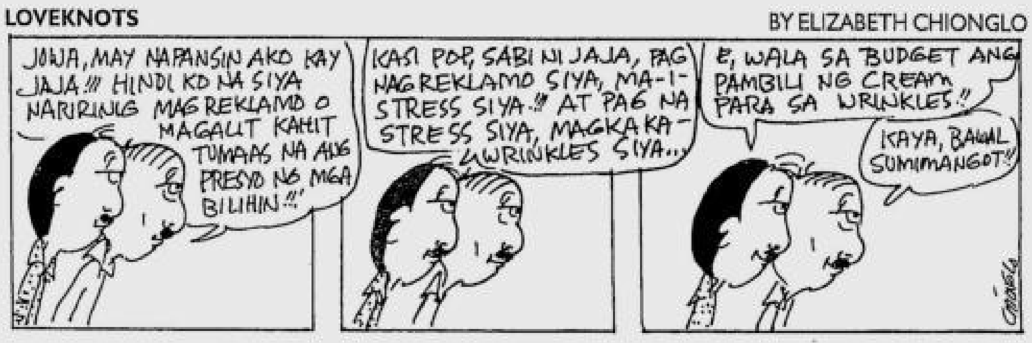
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


Hey, WHAT HAVE you Got tHERE, AtoMo?
THIS ONE I'M HOLDING IS A WISH List. AND THE ONE OVER MY HEAD IS AN ANGRY DARK CLOUD
EVERY time I WISH FOR SOMEtHING, A DARK CLOUD APPEARS.
AND I LIKE it! It MAKES ME FEEL ECCENTRIC

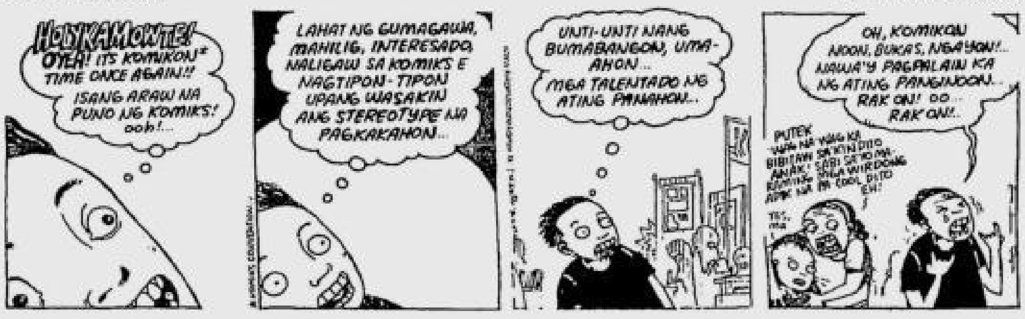
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


JOWA, MAY NAPANSIN AKO KAY JAJA!!! HINDI KO NA SIYA NARIRINIG MAG REKLAMO O MAGALIT KAHIT TUMAAS NA ANG PRESYO NG MGA BILIHIN!!
KASI PO, SABI NI JAJA, PAG NAG REKLAMO SIYA, MA-I-STRESS SIYA!! AT PAG NA STRESS SIYA, MAGKAKA-WRINKLES SIYA...
E, WALA SA BUDGET ANG PAMBILI NG CREAM PARA SA WRINKLES!!
KAYA, BAWAL SUMIMANGOT!!

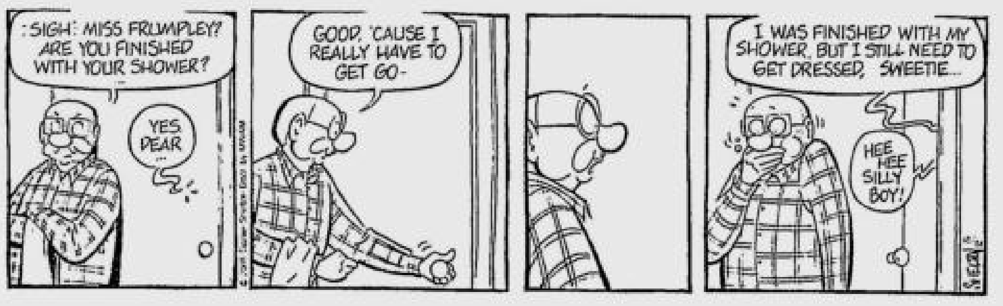
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA

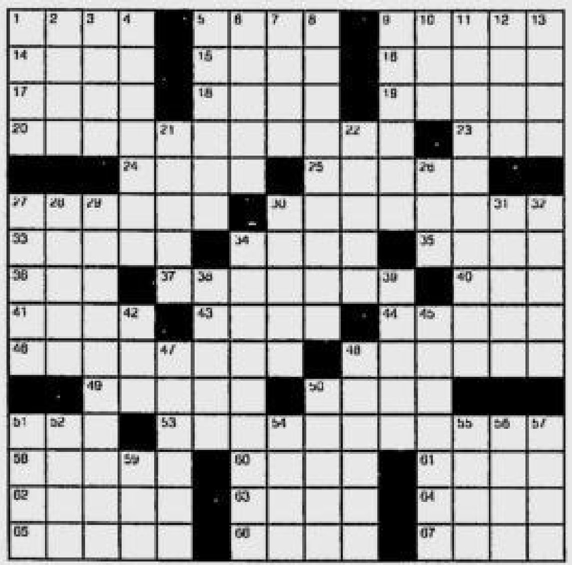

HOLYKAMONTE! OYEA! ITS KOMIKON* TIME ONCE AGAIN!! ISANG ARAW NA PUNO NG KOMIKS! ooh!...
LAHAT NG GUMAGAWA, MAHILIG, INTERESADO, NALIGAW SA KOMIKS E NAGTIPON-TIPON UPANG WASAKIN ANG STEREOTYPE NA PAGKAKAHON...
UNTI-UNTI NANG BUMABANGON, UMA-AHON... MGA TALENTADO NG ATING PANAHON...
OH, KOMIKON NOON, BUKAS, NGAYON!... NAWA'Y PAGPALAIN KA NG ATING PANGINOON... RAK ON! OO... RAK ON!..
PUTEK

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


:SIGH: MISS FRUMPLEY? ARE YOU FINISHED WITH YOUR SHOWER?
YES DEAR
GOOD, 'CAUSE I REALLY HAVE TO GET GO-
I WAS FINISHED WITH MY SHOWER, BUT I STILL NEED TO GET DRESSED, SWEETIE...
HEE HEE SILLY BOY!

DAILY CROSSWORD



By Stanley B. Whitten
Highwood, IL

11/26/07

ACROSS
1 Mineral springs resorts
5 Nights before
9 Loses color
14 Float on the wind
15 Slug or song ending?
16 Corpulent
17 Farm measure
18 Lady of the haus
19 Stop
20 Partner of 53A in comedy
23 __ de plume
24 New Jersey team
25 Automaton of Jewish legend
27 Childish
30 Union soldiers
33 Fragrant resin
34 Blackthorn
35 Solid surface
36 Titled Brit
37 Purify
40 Clothe
41 Spelling or Amos
43 Song and dance, e.g.
44 Regretting
46 Phonograph needles
48 Animation mogul
49 Actress Sophia
50 Bad habit
51 Barbary denizen
53 Partner of 20A in comedy
58 Use a divining rod
60 Tapered tuck
61 Continental dollar
62 Earth visitor
63 Fencing sword
64 Pronounced
65 Change an alarm
66 Portal
67 Petitions

DOWN
1 Booty
2 Wait nervously
3 Bushy do
4 Breastbone
5 Decadent
6 Parts of speech
7 Son of Isaac
8 Caviar producers
9 Ship area, to a bo's'n
10 Burrows or Fortas
11 Partner of 29D in comedy
12 Exxon, formerly
13 Appear to be
21 Photo finish?
22 Centering points
26 Period of note
27 Playful pranks
28 Author of "Silas Marner"
29 Partner of 11D in comedy
30 Deflated tires
31 Sierra __
32 Drooping
34 Sang love songs
38 Coherent light
39 Author Jong
42 Worldwide workers' grp.
45 Futile
47 Pressing
48 Scale watcher
50 Small greenish bird
51 Hebrew month
52 Gdansk resident
54 Guitarist's gadget
55 Hilo feast
56 Ashtabula's lake
57 Head signals
59 Comprehend

Saturday's Puzzle Solved

D	I	S	C	R	E	T	E	■	A	D	H	E	R	E
I	N	T	R	U	D	E	S	■	B	R	O	L	I	N
S	T	O	O	D	P	A	T	■	R	E	L	E	N	T
T	E	N	S	E	■	M	A	D	E	S	E	N	S	E
I	N	E	S	S	E	■	B	R	A	S	S	I	E	R
L	S	D	■	T	E	M	■	E	S	L	■	■	■	■
L	I	E	D	■	L	O	S	■	T	E	S	L	A	S
E	V	A	D	E	■	S	O	S	■	R	E	A	C	T
R	E	D	E	Y	E	■	N	I	A	■	P	I	T	A
■	■	■	■	E	L	F	■	S	R	A	■	D	I	T
S	T	E	E	L	E	R	S	■	E	T	H	A	N	E
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11/26/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You are a free spirit and a survivor. No matter what you do for a living, at heart you're a philosopher. You're highly individualistic! You have a unique point of view about life, and you're not afraid to speak your mind. People find you to be refreshing and inspirational. Your year ahead will focus strongly on partnerships and close friendships.

Birthdate of: Tina Turner, singer; Charles Schulz, cartoonist; Eugene Ionesco, playwright.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): This is a good day for practical discussions with parents and family members. It's also a good day to make repairs at home or solve problems with the gang.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): You're in a serious frame of mind today. You'll be able to accomplish routine work that requires attention to detail. You just want to get the job done!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): You feel thrifty and frugal with money today. If shopping, you will buy only practical items that last for a long time. You definitely want a good value for your money.

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You can rely on your common sense today. You're taking a long-range view of things because you want practical, long-range results. Others might ask you for advice.

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): You'll feel a sense of satisfaction or accomplishment by working alone today. You don't want to be interrupted. You need to give your full attention to the task at hand.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Advice from someone older or more experienced will be helpful to you today. Alternatively, you might be the person giving advice.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Expect to be noticed by others today. You'll briefly be in the spotlight for giving sensible advice or assisting someone in a practical way. People respect you for this.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): This is a good day to figure the cost of travel plans or anything related to publishing, the media and higher education. You're taking a long-range view of things, and you want to know what is involved.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): Discussions about shared property and jointly held possessions will be productive today. Everyone involved is in a serious frame of mind.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): This is the ideal day to sit down with partners and close friends to make plans that are mutually beneficial. People want to iron out little details. Fortunately, everyone has the patience to do so.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): Someone at work might have advice about how to do something. Be open to suggestions. It's always easier to stand on the shoulders of those who have gone before you.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Discussions about the care and responsibility of children will be productive today. Artists can do practical cleanup or preparation work.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis SudoKu

By Dave Green

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		8			3			9
	4			5		6		2
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Difficulty Level ★

11/26

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HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

5	7	8	9	3	2	4	6	1
1	9	3	4	7	6	8	5	2
6	4	2	8	1	5	7	3	9
2	5	7	3	4	8	1	9	6
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9	2	5	1	8	4	6	7	3
3	8	6	5	2	7	9	1	4
7	1	4	6	9	3	2	8	5

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

In praise of public-relations professionals

By Constantino C. Tejero

PEOPLE ONCE THOUGHT any pedestrian who had a gift for gab could become an effective PR person. In other words, the practice was held in low esteem or facetiously dismissed.

PR, interchangeably defined as "public relations" and "press relations," used to be only a support service of advertising. Today it has grown into a full-blown profession. It used to be that doing PR was just moonlighting, or a sideline of one's day job. Now it is a very lucrative career.

A recently launched book tracing the early years of PR in the country and how it came on its own is "How to Make It in PR," published by Context Communications International, Inc.

Subtitled "PR Veterans Tell Their Stories," it is an anthology of professional and personal memoirs by Oscar Villadolid, Charlie Agatep, Maximino Edralin Jr., Virgilio Pantaleon, Francisco Roman, Romeo Virtusio, Rene Nieva, Pedro Padre Jr. and Joycelyn Buensalido.

It is the first of its kind published in the country—a must-read for anyone who aspires to become a PR practitioner or put up a communications business, and should be a textbook for any school of public communication.

The handsomely printed book, edited by Virtusio and with a foreword by JJ Calero (of the advertising world), is divided into two parts comprising the writers' recollections, interviews, kin's testimonials, vintage photographs. For a book of 379 pages, it is rather heavy, as it is of wide and thick glossy paper.

Decalogue of PR

Pieces of invaluable advice are dispensed from page to page. And they're easily digested, too, such as the 10 Commandments of PR as drafted by Nieva.

Or Virtusio's own Decalogue, at once funny, commonsensical and touching (and he even talks of Gaudí and Almodóvar!).

Agatep is a master of crisis management, as could be seen in how he handled the cases of Gen. Antonio Sotelo and Block & White skin lotion.

Buensalido's is an exemplary case of the balancing act between PR job, friendship with journalists, and family.

There is, of course, corporate social responsibility as expounded by everyone who has ever handled big companies as clients.

The wealth of recollections is thrown in relief by the sharpness of memory. Agatep, for instance, remembers stuff like Cortal, Cafiaspirina and a host of cough syrups and laxatives, as well as Esso chemicals, pesticides like Hytox and Eradox.

Cultural and historical trivia abound. Who would have thought you could get a taxicab from Baguio to Manila for P75 in the mid-1960s? Or that a newspaperman in the early '60s was getting P450 a month, plus P60 transportation allowance?

Journalism vs PR

The writers' styles vary from the carefully worded to the breezy, from the jargonish to the conversational, from the technical to the self-consciously literary. One thing they have in common, though, is clarity: the lucidness of writing and the lucidity of ideas.

There, too, is a certain softness about the pieces, so that even if it is technical writing the common reader can easily absorb. It must be the training in communication, the discipline of getting the message across with the minimum of effort, that PR entails.

To be sure there are the cliché words, the specialized language, the motherhood statements, the do-gooder attitude, the perpetual name-dropping—but these, too, must be taken as quite natural in this world, and don't sound artificial or false.

The book's second part comprises brief profiles of three pioneers: a piece on RR de la Cruz and old interviews with Pedro Teodoro and José Carpio (considered the Dean of Public Relations in the Philippines).

At first blush, legitimate journalism and PR practice would seem to be at odds. The issue of their symbiosis and antagonism had been extensively discussed in a recent cover story of PJR Reports.

Yet most of the PR honchos in this book started out in journalism: Edralin, Villadolid, Padre, Pantaleon and Virtusio.

What is propaganda to one is advocacy to another. But, really, they're just two sides of the same coin.

AUTHORS Rene Nieva, Pete Padre, Romy Virtusio, Joy Buensalido, Charlie Agatep and Frankie Roman during book launching at PowerBooks in Greenbelt 4 Makati JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

HOW TO MAKE IT IN PR
PR Veterans Tell Their Stories

NATIONAL Book Store's Socorro Ramos JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

Beowulf myth in 3D

From page E1

Three-part story

The epic, generally presented as a three-part structure because of the three monsters that antagonize the main character, is staple reading in European literature classes. It sings of the great warrior Beowulf's exploits in the old kingdom of Denmark, ruled by King Hrothgar.

The unfortunate objects of Beowulf's conquest are the monster Grendel, who has been terrorizing the land, and later his mother, who avenges Grendel's death by attacking and killing a royal adviser.

Understandably, the screenplay, written by Neil Gaiman ("Stardust," "The Sandman" series) and Roger Avary ("Pulp Fiction"), fills in many of the gaps in the poem, including a 50-year void that fast-forwards the story to Beowulf's final, fatal battle with a dragon irritated by the theft of its treasure.

Most notable is the movie's presentation of Beowulf's meeting with Grendel's mother, a nameless creature that the literary text says is descended from the first murderer, Cain.

Scholars are at loggerheads as to her nature; she has been described as a hag as well as a Valkyrie, a Teutonic goddess. In the movie, she is a beautiful seductress with unknown power, hinted to have brought under her spell not only Beowulf himself but also Hrothgar.

Disjointed

"The poem always seemed disjointed to me and, in particular, Beowulf never seemed to be the most reliable of narrators," says Avary. "For instance, Grendel never attacks Hrothgar; he just torments him. Why? It made me ask the simple question that for some reason no one has ever asked before: Who is Grendel's father?"

As for Beowulf, it is said that he killed Grendel's mother, but we only have his word and, in fact, he emerged from the cave with Grendel's head, and not the mother's.

"It became obvious to me that Beowulf had fallen prey to the same temptations I surmised had befallen Hrothgar—the temptations of a siren. He had made a pact with a demon," Avary says.

For the scriptwriters, even the dragon is connected to the earlier battles, and is treated as a demon of Beowulf's past come to exact vengeance for the warrior's past sins.

In the poem, this final battle takes place in Beowulf's home kingdom. But the movie presents him as the successor of Hrothgar, conflicted in his old age by the excesses of his warrior-lifestyle.

Inadvertently, this new plot creates a hole and leaves it open: What was broken in the pact between Beowulf and Grendel's mother?

Limited stellar cast

The use of performance-capture technology should have saved a lot for the movie's production despite the high-caliber cast.

Ray Winstone ("The Departed") lends his likeness to the warrior Beowulf. Sir Anthony Hopkins is the troubled king Hrothgar, whose profligacy, we discover, is caused by a past indiscretion.

John Malkovich is the jealous Unferth, who accuses Beowulf of being a boastful boor who has nothing to show for all his talk.

Angelina Jolie provides the 3D image of Grendel's mother. Finally, British actor Brendan Gleeson is Beowulf's right-hand man, Wiglaf, while Robin Wright Penn is Hrothgar's wife, the Queen Wealthow.

Arguably, however, the performance of the cast is limited by the technology itself. While the 3D rendering is excellent, nothing substitutes for the most subtle nuances real actors bring to the screen, most importantly by the eyes.

The technology does open up a lot of possibilities not imaginable in a real set and with real actors. Still, the viewer will get lost in the movie's attempt to be authentic, language-wise. There is a smattering of German-sounding poetry, and Grendel speaks in indiscernible Old English.

The writer particularly cringes at Jolie's fake Old English accent. Meanwhile, Crispin Glover's screams make the 12-foot Grendel seem like a piteous autistic rather than a rightly troubled monster.

Bold move

The movie is being screened in both 3D and 2D formats, but viewers of the latter will not miss much if they don't go the extra mile (or several) to the only 3D movie theater in the metro.

"Beowulf" is a bold gamble by Zemeckis, notwithstanding the warm reception to "The Polar Express," his first performance-capture feature.

"Polar Express" was a children's Christmas story, and the 3D "Beowulf" teeters between the 7-12 demographic for its computer-generated images, and the much more mature audiences for its gore.

Which is a pity, since today's audiences could have appreciated a gripping, live-action film on a warrior myth of yore.

QUEEN Wealthow (Robin Wright Penn) presents the dragon horn to Beowulf.

HROTHGAR (Anthony Hopkins)

"BEOWULF" stars John Malkovich, Anthony Hopkins, Angelina Jolie and Ray Winstone

Grand homecoming to mark UST Varsitarian's 80th year

THE VARSITARIAN, THE OFFICIAL STUDENT organ of University of Santo Tomas and the country's oldest and most respected Catholic campus paper, will mark its 80th anniversary on Jan. 19 with a grand alumni homecoming.

Billed "Valik Varsi 80," the reunion will be held at Sofitel Philippine Plaza at the Cultural Center of the Philippines complex.

The Varsitarian has produced some of the country's top writers, artists, teachers, thinkers, scholars and media professionals. It is the only student paper to have an entry in the CCP Encyclopedia for the Arts. Its alumni include National Artists for Literature F. Sionil José and Bienvenido Lumbera, and National Artist for the Visual Arts J. Elizalde Navarro.

All Varsitarian alumni here and abroad are invited. Slots are limited.

For reservations, call the Varsitarian office at 4061611 local 8235, or visit the official website at www.valikvarsi.com, or text Kristine Jane Liu at 09152563631, Jenny Aguilar at 09275278128, or Emil Dela Cruz at 09063254523.

UE holds law lecture series

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE East, with the UE College of Law, UE Foundation for Research and Advanced Studies Inc., UE Law Alumni Association Inc., and Philippine Association of Law Schools will hold the First Luzviminda D. Puno Memorial Lecture with Chief Justice Reynato S. Puno as lecturer.

The lecture, "The Importance of Family in Nation-Building," will be held on Dec. 6, 2 p.m., at the UE Conference Hall, 4/F Dalupan Sr. Bldg., UE Manila.

"This lecture is dedicated to the memory of the chief justice's late wife and Supreme Court clerk of court Luzviminda D. Puno, who provided the inspiration in the phenomenal rise of Chief Justice Puno," said Amado Valdez, UE law dean.

Luzviminda Puno, a UE alumna, was posthumously awarded the UE Alumni Outstanding Achievement Award for "achieving exceptional career goals and earning a superior reputation in the practice of law," during UE's 59th commencement exercises last April, when the chief justice was conferred the degree of doctor of laws, honoris causa.

PUNO

Jessica Hagedorn in homecoming

FILIPINO-AMERICAN WRITER JESSICA Hagedorn has been called the "vanguard artist" of her generation. Her works have garnered acclaim as the "kind of novels that will be written in the next century."

Her style, incorporating song, poetry and images, challenges conventional notion of fiction.

Hagedorn was back in Manila recently and PowerBooks Specialty Store played host to her book-signing at the Carlos P. Romulo Auditorium Lobby, RCBC Plaza.

Aside from meeting the author, guests were also treated to the opening premiere of the Atlantis Productions theatrical adaptation of Hagedorn's best-selling novel "Dogeaters."

Set against the backdrop of the turbulent Marcos regime, "Dogeaters" is a provocative peek into the Filipinos' troubled past. Published in 1990, the book received the American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation. It also got a National Book Award nomination for Best Fiction.

Largely influenced by her multiracial ancestry, Hagedorn explores issues of the nation's fragmented identity as a result of colonization, which echoes her own experiences as she searches for her place between two cultures.

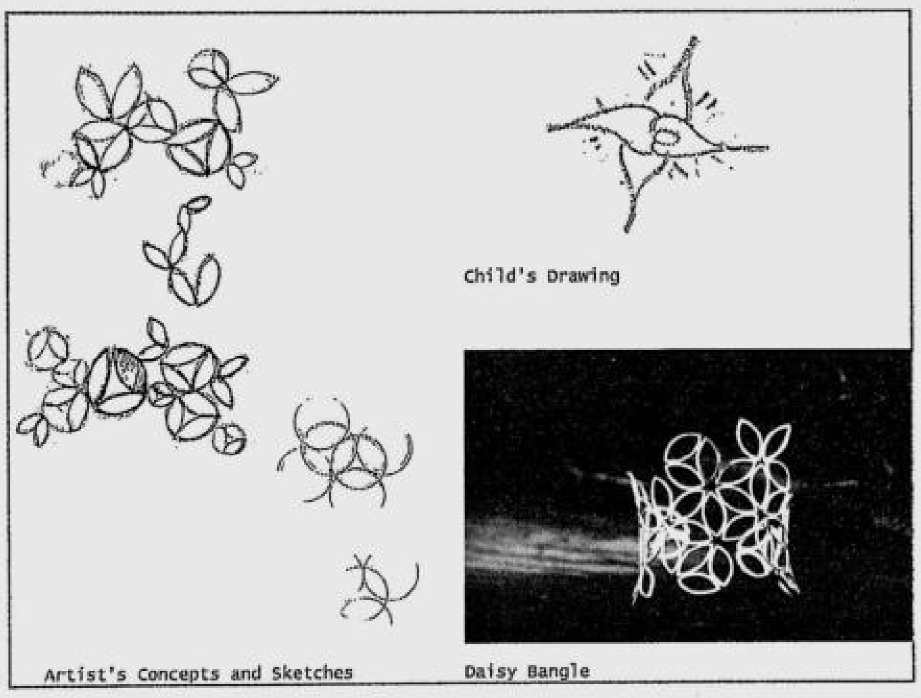
Her foray into multicultural literature continues on with her latest novel, "Dream Jungle," a narrative that chronicles the clash of American and Filipino cultures through the discovery of a lost tribe and the arrival of an American film crew.

Hagedorn's other works include "Burning Heart" and "Gangster of Love." Her poetry collections include "Danger and Beauty," "Dangerous Music," and "Pet Food and Tropical Apparitions."

She has also mounted theatrical pieces like "Mango Tango" and "Tenement Lover."

Her books are available at PowerBooks, which has branches at Greenbelt 4 (7576428 to 29); Megamall (6352898 to 99); Alabang Town Center (8505662 to 63); Glorietta 3 (7527075); Shangri-La (6380023/25); Robinson's Place Ermita (5233334/ 5243448); Mall of Asia (5560244); Festival Supermall (8508221); and TriNoma (9431581/82).

"DOGEATERS" director Bobby Garcia, writer Jessica Hagedorn, and PowerBooks GM Gabby Licauco

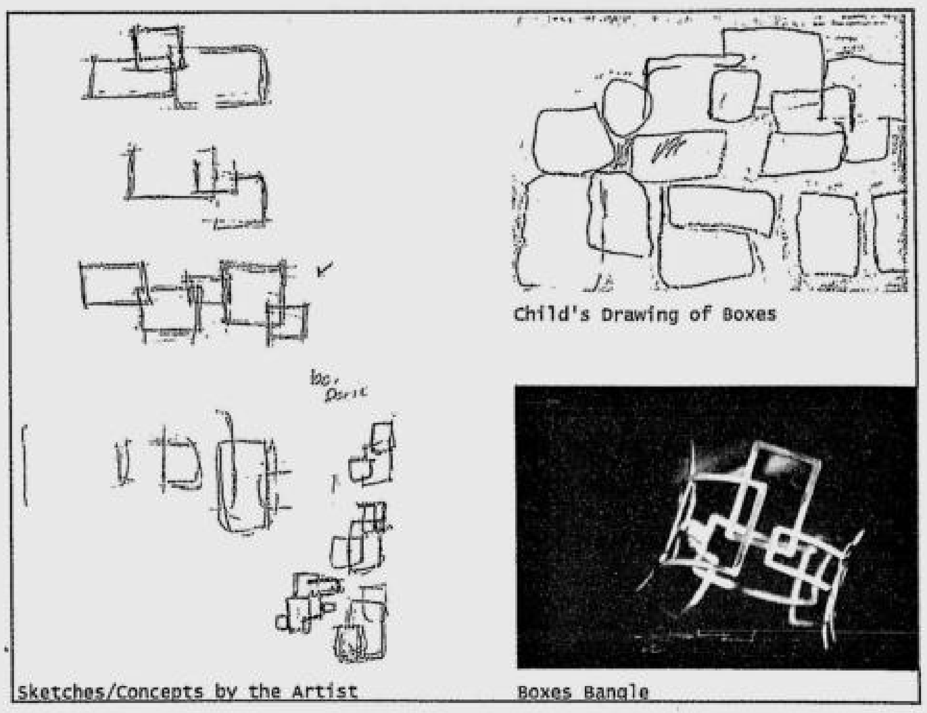


Child's Drawing

Artist's Concepts and Sketches

Daisy Bangle

Kristine Dee's jewelry designs seek to capture the hopes of children



Child's Drawing of Boxes

Sketches/Concepts by the Artist

Boxes Bangle

Childlike 'Emotions'

Did you know?
Home microwave ovens were introduced in the 50's.
Introduced in 1951. Like the micro, Cream Corn Starch has been in kitchens ever since.
Also available: Cream ALL-PURPOSE FLOUR

By Johnathan Libarios Rondina
Contributor

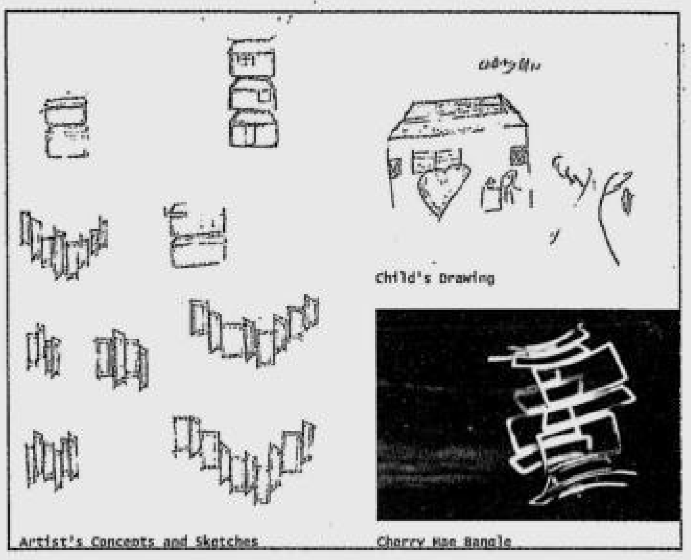
THE BANTAY BATA 163 shelter in Norzagaray, Bulacan, run by ABS-CBN Foundation, Inc., in partnership with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), is a safe haven for children rescued from abusive environments.

Many of the young residents at this Children's Village are bound by a common history of unimaginable neglect and violence. But when industrial-designer-cum-jewelry-artist Kristine Dee asked them to put their hopes and dreams to paper in an arts therapy workshop early this year, she was surprised to find vivid images of optimism and aspiration.

Drawing inspiration

"Many of them drew houses, I guess, because they're all dreaming of happy homes," Dee says. "Others drew pictures of themselves as police enforcers, nurses, and as other professionals while others drew happy images like flowers, stars, or angels."

For Dee, these images are telling. They may be bruised and battered, but Bantay Bata's wards remain steadfast in their dreams of happier, more fruitful lives.



Child's Drawing

Artist's Concepts and Sketches

Cherry Hae Bangle

In her third exhibit of fine jewelry, "Emotions," on view in E Galerie in Serendra until Nov. 30, Dee draws inspiration from these innocent expressions of hope and showcases an exquisite collection of fine pieces that evoke quiet grace and strength.

Also on view at the show are sketches made by the children as well as the artist's conceptual drawings of her own re-interpretations. Viewers thus become privy to the metamorphosis of a creative project, a poignant collaboration between an artist and her muses.

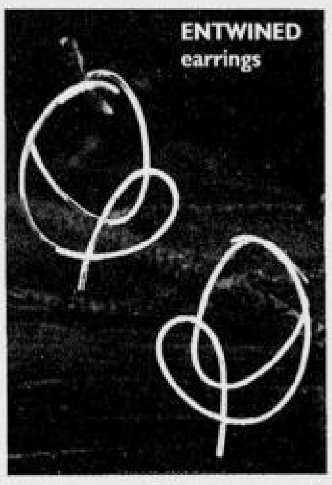
Here, visions of a happy home transform into a lovely bangle with geometric shapes, and cheerful images like stars and flowers evolve into intricate handmade ornaments in white, yellow and rose-gold studded with pearls and diamonds.

"This project means a lot to me," explains Dee, who recently gave birth to her first child. "Since I became a mother, I have become more sensitive, more emotional. I don't want to do something just for the sake of doing it. I want everything I do to have a purpose, to have meaning."

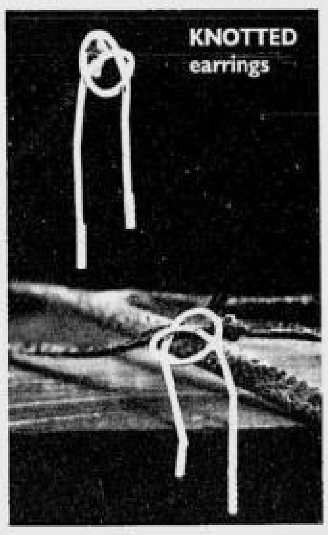
Purpose and proportion

Dee's artistic philosophy is informed by her professional ethic as an industrial designer for Duo Designs, Inc., a Manila-based company she runs with husband Sheldon Villanueva which exports furnishings, lighting and other home accessories.

Her work, both in industrial design and jewelry-making, manifests a deep proclivity for function, aesthetics and proportion. In "Emotions," Dee presents a collection of unique designs that feature the tension between linear forms, such as in her "Entwined" and "Knotted" series.



ENTWINED earrings



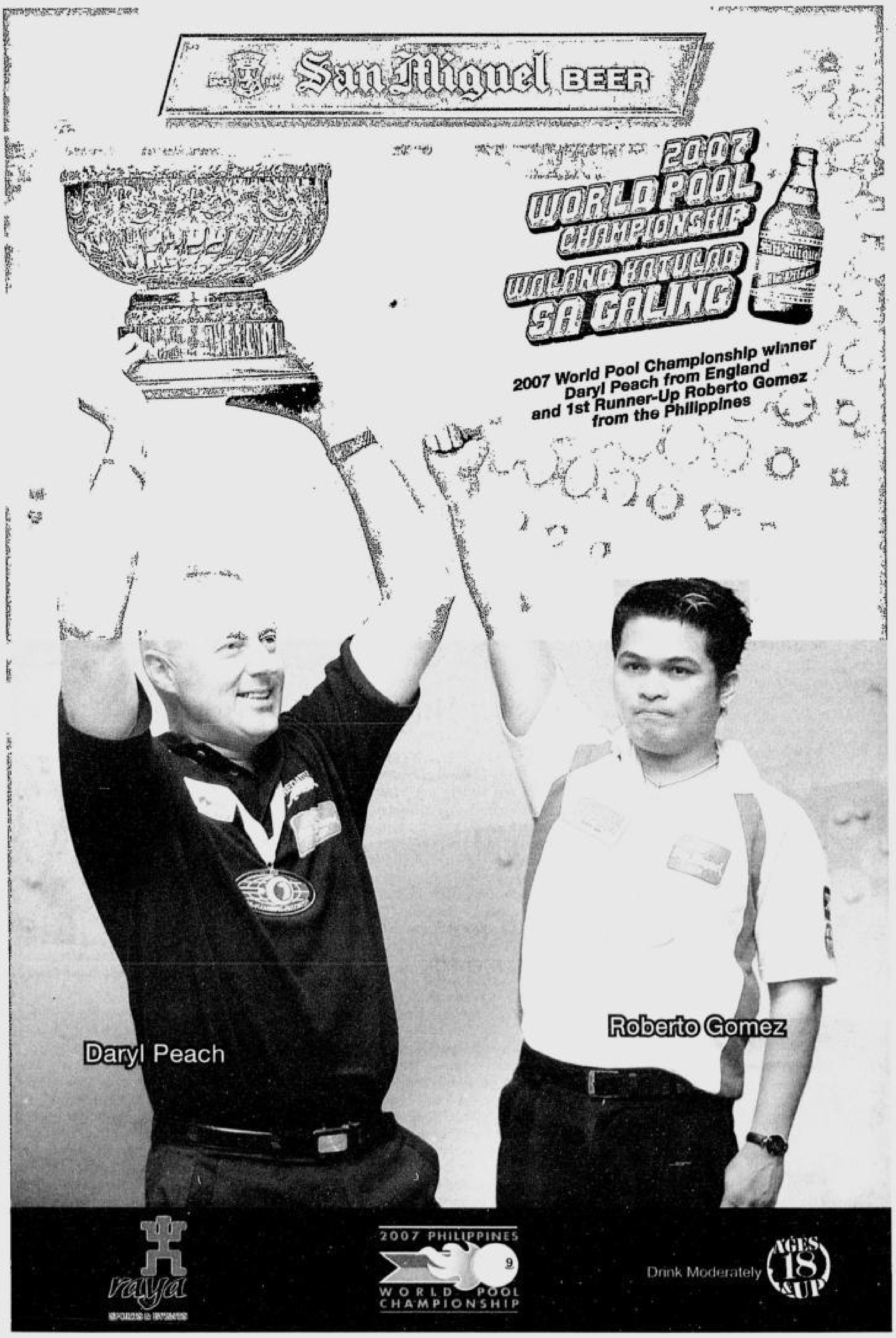
KNOTTED earrings

A graduate of De la Salle University College of St. Benilde, Dee, 31, obtained her master's degree in Industrial Design from the Pratt Institute in New York. Some of her works have been showcased at the New York Manhattan Center and at the 2001 International Furniture Fair in Milan.

Dee, who likens jewelry-making to sculpture, does all her pieces by hand, making each a one-of-a-kind work of art.

"I want the person wearing my jewelry to feel as unique as the piece," she explains.

"Emotions" runs until Nov. 30 in E Galerie, 2/F, Serendra, Fort Bonifacio, Global City. Proceeds from the show will help support the projects of Bantay Bata 163. Call 9153840.



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2007 PHILIPPINES WORLD POOL CHAMPIONSHIP
Drink Moderately
AGES 18 & UP

Artfest to raise scholarship fund

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE Philippines Industrial Engineering (UPIE) Club will mark its 40th anniversary with "Have a Heart: An Art Festival for a Cause," a half-day of live sketching, collaborations with artists, and art pledges, at the Ayala Alabang Country Club on Dec. 1.

Doors open at 1 p.m. but the art pledge starts at 4 p.m. Tickets are at P5,000 each. Snacks are available.

Each art pledge is guaranteed and artwork worth P10,000 or more.

The art exhibit will be from Dec. 1-15 at the same venue.

All proceeds will go to the UP IE Club Scholarship Fund.

ENTERTAINMENT

Website: www.inquirer.net/entertainment

Editor Emmie G. Velarde

sms feedback: inquirer ent name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 283 (Smart) or email us at entertainment@inquirer.com.ph

INSIDE
- Dennis Trillo should break his silence Dollywood/G2
- Cinema One Originals digital film fest set Nov. 30-Dec. 2 /G4

Pass the Cheer

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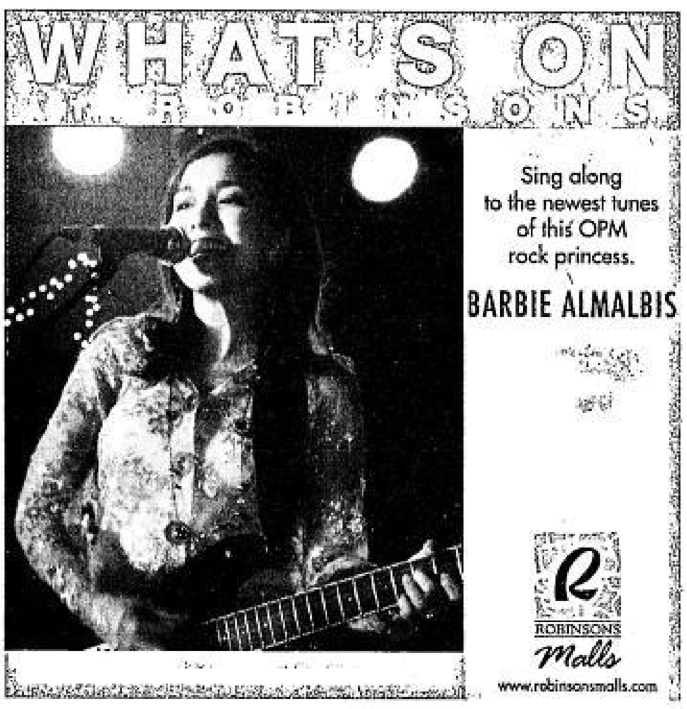
FLYING SANDWICH
What the...? His band-mates may have seen it coming, but not this fast. That's Raymund Marasigan of Sandwich (left) in a fit during a recent gig. More photos on page F3. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN


WHAT'S ON ROBINSONS

Sing along to the newest tunes of this OPM rock princess.

BARBIE ALMALBIS

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A fine romance

Besides their love for music, Regine and Ogie also often share ... makeup tips

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

ON THE SET OF "BUBBLE GANG" recently, Ogie Alcasid candidly told INQUIRER Entertainment that girlfriend Regine Velasquez had given him makeup tips to improve his alter ego in drag, Papaya Guanio.

This was confirmed by Regine in a subsequent exclusive interview.

"We were not yet a couple then," she recounted. "It started on the set of [the GMA 7 musical-variety show] 'SOP.' It was [co-host] Janno Gibbs' birthday and he wanted to come out as Beyoncé Knowles. Ogie was assigned to dress as Jennifer Lopez."

Ogie donned a skimpy costume, she recalled. "In fairness, he was super thin at the time."

He even wore a prosthetic butt for that extra J-Lo oomph, she said.

Trust Regine to fuss over Ogie's makeup, though.

Sexy chimp

"He was sexy in a dress. But his face ... he looked like a *bakulaw* [gorilla]," Regine reminisced with a hearty laugh. She told him, pointblank: "You're ugly!"

Later on, while guesting on another Kapuso show, "Eat Bulaga," Ogie admiringly gazed at the show's "Be-

A FINE/ F2

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1 BOOGEYMAN 2 • THX
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2 ONE MORE CHANCE
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

3 ANIMAHENASYON:
2007 Pinoy Animation Festival

4 GAME PLAN
1:00 3:10 5:20 7:30AS

5 HITMAN
1:15 3:25 5:35 7:45 10:00

6 ENCHANTED
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

7 GREEN PARADISE
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

8 THE NANNY DIARIES
1:25 3:30 5:35 7:40 9:45

9 ENCHANTED
2:00 4:30 7:00 9:30

10 BEOWULF
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

ERMITA Ticket Price: P110 / P120

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6 THE NANNY DIARIES
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7 BOOGEYMAN 2
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Midtown

1 GAME PLAN
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2 ENCHANTED
12:50 3:10 5:30 7:50 10:00

3 HITMAN
11:15 1:25 3:35 5:45 7:55 10:00

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MTRCB GP
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② HITMAN
MTRCB R-13 12:20
2:45, 5:10, 7:35, 10:00

③ BEOWULF
MTRCB PG-13
2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00

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MTRCB PG-13
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OGIE is now a pretty woman, because of his girlfriend's expertise. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

A fine…

From page F1

bot" contestants—male celebs like Mark Herras and Rainier Castillo who competed in the gay pageant.

"Ogie whispered to me that his goal was to join that contest next time. I told him not to even try," Regine said, chortling.

The next time Ogie had to don a dress, Regine took it upon herself to give him a crash course on cosmetics.

Regine, an aspiring Fine Arts student, is a whiz with the makeup brush and often does her own face for shows and concerts.

Instructions

"After I did his makeup, Ogie told me that he felt beautiful," she said. "I instructed him not to let makeup artists put lines on his nose—for an instant lift. I also told him not let them 'erase' his eyebrows and draw fake ones on his forehead. That was why he looked like a *bakulaw*. Instead they should highlight his eyes because they're beautiful."

Now, Regine finds his boyfriend's Papaya persona lovely.

"At last, he looks like a real girl—with macho arms *nga lang*," she joked.

Regine and Ogie, who hosted "Celebrity Duets" recently, hope to tap into the same easy chemistry when they start shooting their movie, "Love is Blind and Deaf," under director Dominic Zapata, in February next year.

The couple collaborated on the concept, which was developed into a script by Alfred Aloysius Adlawan.

Differently abled

In the movie co-produced by Viva and GMA Films, they portray a differently abled couple. "I'm a blind pianist and he's a deaf composer. They're partners in every sense of the word because they rely on each other."

Regine related that she often bumps into real-life couples like their characters. "I often see them when I sing in charity shows—leading each other, helping each other."

In a lot of ways, she sees Ogie and herself in them.

After all, Regine and Ogie's partnership as singer-composer has yielded not a few hits.

For the new movie's soundtrack, she's set to record "Ako'y sa Iyo," an old Jaya song composed by Ogie.

"It fits the movie's story," she noted.

Brad pulls out of film, risks suit

LOS ANGELES—Brad Pitt has pulled out of Universal Pictures' "State of Play" over a script issue, and is at risk of being sued by the studio, film industry media said Friday.

Pitt, 43, plays the part of an investigative reporter in the screen adaptation of the British television miniseries about the murder of a lawmakers' mistress.

Production was slated to start earlier this month under Scottish director Kevin Macdonald ("The Last King of Scotland," 2006). Pitt's decision on Wednesday to drop out over a script issue put it on hold, Variety magazine said. *AFP*

IT STARTED OUT WELL ENOUGH
And then someone in the audience—during the recent launch of Ramon Jacinto's Underground Radio 105.9 FM—questioned the lyrics of an original composition that he just performed. Raymund Marasigan of Sandwich engaged the protester in an argument that heated up quickly and sent him flying towards his stunned drummer, Joey Dizon. Which gave pause to guitarist Kris Dancel, right, and bassist Myrene Academia, Raymund's wife, but only for a moment. They carried on (bottom). But the frustrated vocalist stormed out. JIM GUIAO PUNZALAN

J.K. Rowling, top entertainer

'Potter' author cited by Entertainment Weekly, besting H'wood A-listers

NEW YORK—J.K. ROWLING'S MAGICAL, Midas touch has landed her on the cover of Entertainment Weekly as the magazine's entertainer of the year.

The magazine said the "Harry Potter" author, who has sold nearly 400 million copies of her boy-wizard series that has been adapted into a mega-successful movie franchise, deserved props for getting "people to tote around her big, old-fashioned printed-on-paper books as if they were the hottest new entertainment devices on the planet."

Rowling was in a class by herself on the magazine's list of the year's top entertainers, which was separated by editors into five other categories that evoke school cliques: prodigies, class clowns, most popular, most buzzed-about and valedictorians.

The magazine named George Clooney—actor, director, activist—a valedictorian because he has "deftly balanced box-office viability with personal responsibility." Will Smith, Angelina Jolie and the cast of "The Sopranos" also made the grade, among others.

Matt Damon made the list of most popular, as did Carrie Underwood, Katherine Heigl, Johnny Depp and Kanye West.

Weird avenue

The prodigies: Zac Efron, Shia LaBeouf, Rihanna and Miley Cyrus.

Tina Fey, creator and co-star of "30 Rock," was recognized as a class clown for her hilariously cringe-inducing portrayal of comedy-show producer Liz Lemon on the NBC sitcom.

"I'll go down any weird avenue," she tells the magazine.

Other clowns: Vanessa Williams, "The Simpsons" and director Judd Apatow and his gang of actor buddies including Seth Rogen and Paul Rudd. Apatow cast his pals in the acclaimed comedies "The 40 Year Old Virgin" and this year's "Knocked Up," which cracked people up with a winning combination of heart and R-rated raunch.

Amy Winehouse, Gerard Butler, Tyler Perry and the A&E series "Mad Men" were named the most buzz-worthy.

DID YOU KNOW...

U2 in tiny chapel gig

LONDON—IRISH rock band U2 played a surprise gig Friday in a London church before just 250 people.

Bono—real name Paul Hewson—and guitarist The Edge—David Evans—performed a low-key acoustic set at the Union Chapel in Islington, North London.

The crowd had no idea U2 would be among the acts at the session in aid of Mencap, a charity working with people suffering from learning disabilities.

. Event curator Jo Whiley introduced the "very special guests" by saying that guitarist Dave was nervous as he had only been playing the instrument a few weeks.

"The singer, Paul, is a shy guy, so please be gentle with him," Whiley said, before Bono and The Edge emerged. *AFP*

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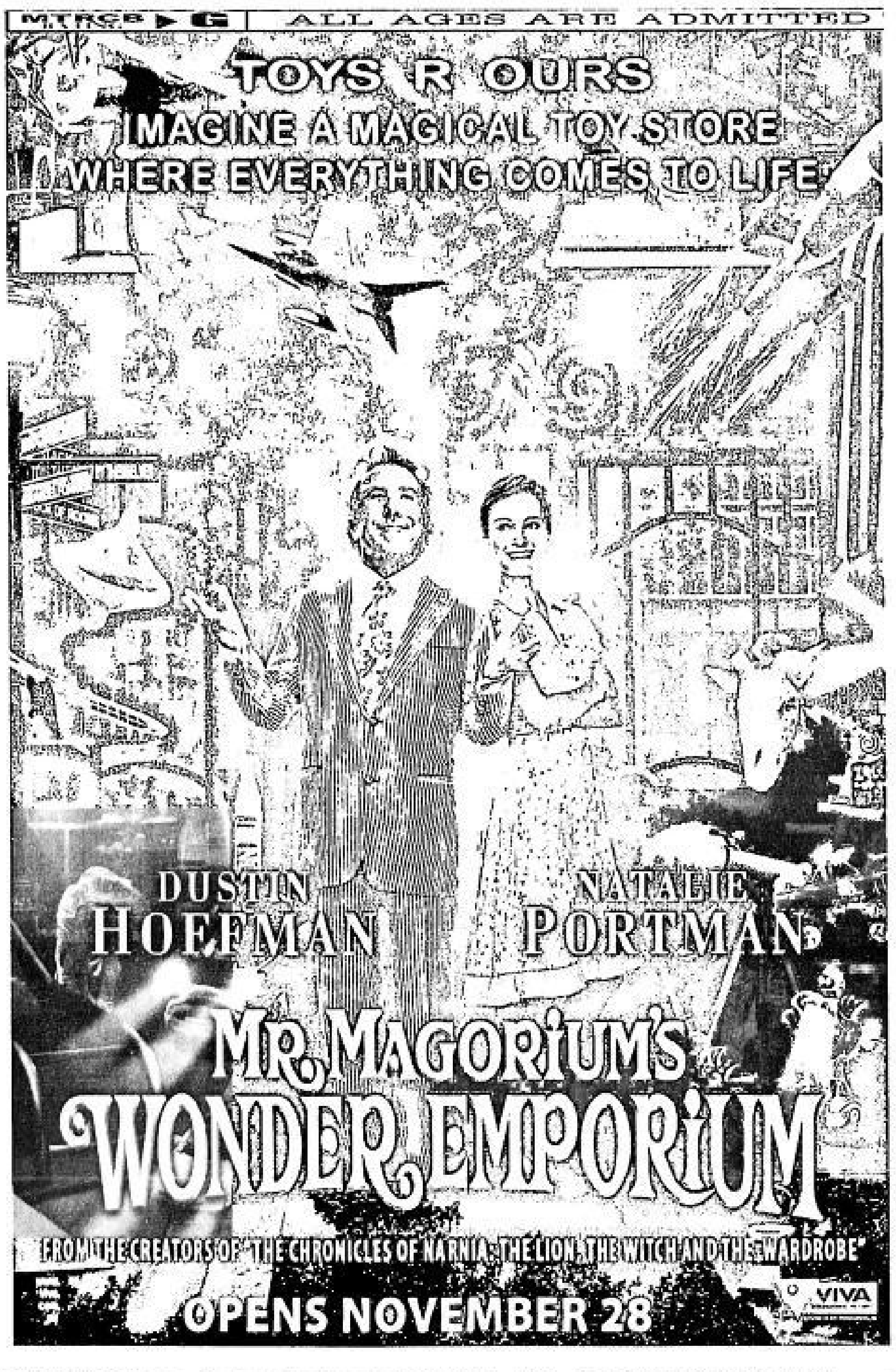
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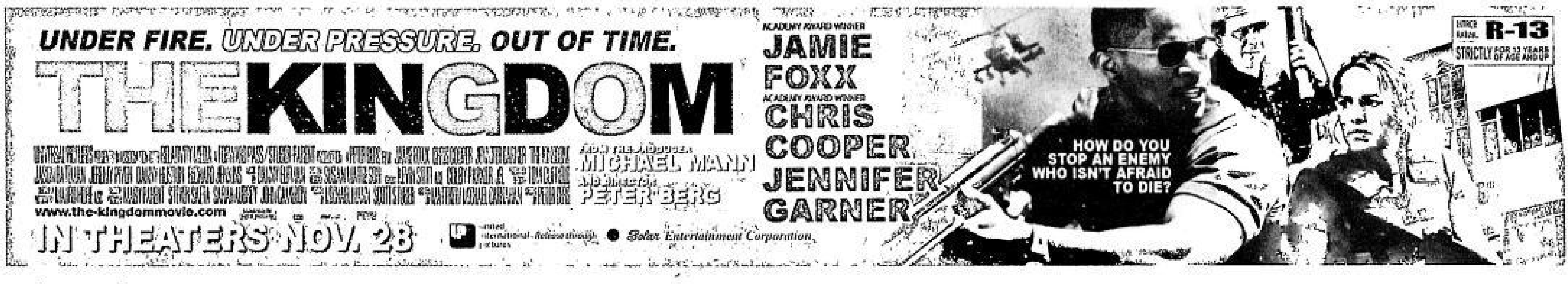
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Christmas albums to choose from

SPIN

JED Madela

JED MADELA'S "THE VOICE of Christmas" CD (Universal Records) has 13 tracks featuring traditional (a medley of "Joy to the World," Good King Wenceslas," "O Come All Ye Faithful" and "Hark the Herald"), popular ("Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas," "Give Love on Christmas Day," "It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year," "White Christmas") and OPM ("A Perfect Christmas," "Sana Ngayong Pasko") Yuletide tunes.

A cappella

The UP Singing Ambassadors have recorded not one, but two a cappella Christmas albums—"Songs of the Season 1 and 2"—which contain Filipino and English selections, traditional carols and classics from the likes of George Frideric Handel and John Rutter, plus bonus tracks including a Michel Legrand medley.

From sacred to secular

Meanwhile, Josh Groban's Grammy-nominated "Noel" Christmas album is now available locally at all House of Praise outlets. Produced by David Foster, it features 13 tracks ranging from the sacred to the secular, including duets with Brian McKnight and Faith Hill, and accompanied by the London Symphony Orchestra.

25 songs

House of Praise's own double-disc release, "Christmas Spirit: 25 Songs of the Festive Season," features new renditions of classic carols including "Silent Night," "O Holy Night," "We Wish You A Merry Christmas" and more, with vocals by Ingrid DuMosch, Lucy Mizen, Wendy Green, David Lyle, among others.

'Fresh picks'

Sony BMG announces its "fresh picks" releases this season:

"Blackout," Britney Spears' latest. album, which despite negative media attention surrounding the artist's private life, has yielded a number 1 hit single, "Gimme More," and good reviews from the US press; Sean Kingston's self-titled debut album, which includes the infectious "Beautiful Girls," a track currently on local radio's heavy rotation list; J. Lo's "Brave" CD; Alicia Keys' "As I Am"; Celine Dion's "Taking Chances"; "Ultimate Santana," a greatest hits collection; Wyclef's "Carnival II: Memoirs of an Immigrant"; Chris Brown's "Exclusive"; Paul Potts' debut "One Chance"; and Foo Fighters' "Echoes, Silence, Patience and Grace."

Kyla's latest

Kyla returns with a new album titled "Heartfelt" (EMI Philippines), which contains a number of soul/R&B covers from the '70s and '80s; a version of "American Idol" finalist Elliot Yamin's "Wait For You"; a remake of Joey Albert's "It's Over Now"; and an original track, "Someone."

Lala's debut

Fil-Indonesian singer-songwriter Lala has recently been launched in the Philippines with her debut album, "Stars" (Warner)—containing 10 tracks, including a duet with Christian Bautista. Her record label says Lala's style is reminiscent of Michelle Branch and Alanis Morisette.

Eagles' new studio album

The Eagles are out with a new, self-produced album, "Long Road Out of Eden" (MCA). It is the band's first studio recording since 1979.

The two-disc set features a number of Don Henley/Glenn Frey co-writes, a range of musical styles most representative of the band's "Hotel California" and "The Long Run" eras, a mix of lengthy set pieces, more California rock and radio-oriented tracks.

Joe Walsh and Timothy B. Schmit are also given solo vocal parts.

KYLA

REVIEW

VINCE Vaughn as Fred Claus and John Michael Higgins as an elf. Paul Giamatti as the more popular Nick Claus doesn't look friendly here.

'Fred Claus': Ho, ho, humbug!

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Contributor

All in all, it isn't exactly something that kids might enjoy watching

THE NEW HOLIDAY COMEDY "FRED Claus" is a curious oddity: On the one hand, it's a simple, unassuming story about disharmony in Santa's family; on the other, a number of distinguished actors lend their inimitable presence to it. It's also a film that, strangely enough, has some grownup humor, uncomfortably inserted into the cutesy, whimsical trappings of Christmas traditions and clean merrymaking.

Traditionally wholesome figures and touchy family rivalries are thrown into a blender and, voila, "Fred Claus" isn't exactly something that kids might enjoy watching. The film is more an examination of difficulties between siblings than a safe, cheery, magical sojourn.

There's still the whole Santa lore and his gift-giving routine. But it's really about the unsung brother Fred (Vince Vaughn), an ordinary Joe who gets in trouble again and asks his estranged younger brother, the ever-popular icon Nick Claus (Paul Giamatti), for help.

It's been a while since they last communicated (in the story, saints and their families become immortals), but Santa expectedly helps him and invites him over. Fred hesitantly heads to the North Pole to help out with preparing the next global gift delivery. It's a reunion that Mrs. Claus (Miranda Richardson) isn't looking forward to. But it's one that the suspicious outsider, Clyde (Kevin Spacey), can use to his advantage, because it just might ruin Saint Nick's good name.

Scrooge-Grinch mix

Clyde is a visiting efficiency expert and inspector, and brings news of recent drastic changes in other holidays. His appearance bodes ill for the Christmas townsfolk, because he's Scrooge and the Grinch rolled into one.

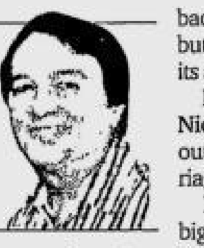
"Fred Claus," directed by David Dobkin of "Wedding Crashers," keeps reiterating the struggles and insecurities of the unpopular brother. In one bizarre and somewhat revealing scene, Frank Stallone, Roger Clinton, and Stephen Baldwin play themselves, attendees of a "siblings anonymous" meet where they briefly talk about living in the shadow of their more famous and beloved brothers. Fred identifies; he believes that every kid deserves to get something on Christmas, not so subtly alluding to his situation and quiet search for validation.

That message is intact throughout the movie, even when things occasionally get dull and cumbersome. To add to its quirkiness, Paul Giamatti as Santa Claus looks a little creepy. He's okay, he acts the part, but he's not really the friendliest-looking or most adorable Santa you'll see. Vaughn is rightly sassy and smarmy; he introduces some contemporary culture and craziness to his new elf colleagues. Rachel Weisz is just right as his Brit girlfriend, while Kathy Bates appears as his insecurity-exacerbating mother. They don't do much, but they gleefully grace this peculiar Yuletide tableau, regardless.

But for an unconventional Christmas movie, "Fred Claus" proceeds and ends quite conventionally. It's not entirely coherent, and it's barely revelry-inspiring, but it does inspire the customary warm and fuzzy feelings.

Major stars opt for family over career

VIEWFINDER



Nestor U. Torre

PERHAPS IT'S DUE TO THE FACT THAT they've become wealthy and thus financially secure, but a number of major stars have been "shocking" producers by opting for family over career.

Paul Newman was an early "dropout" some years ago. He was at the top of his film game in the '50s and '60s, but he later cut back on his movie output to focus on his wife, **Joanne Woodward**, and their kids, his penchant for car racing, and his salad dressing "sideline."

The sideline made hundreds of millions of dollars, but Newman didn't keep a penny of it, choosing instead to donate the fortune to his favorite charities.

Not to worry: As Hollywood's top leading man at his prime, he had already made millions for himself and his family.

Robert Redford also decided to focus on more personal pursuits in the '80s and '90s: He founded the now very influential Sundance Institute, which stages an annual film festival for independents, and he shifted his moviemaking attention from acting to directing.

On the distaff side, **Julia Roberts** was making top money for years as America's movie sweetheart—until she got married and dropped her high-flying career to focus on her husband and the babies that started coming one after the other.

After three kids, Roberts has made a comeback of sorts, both in the theater and on the big screen. But, it doesn't look like she'll be going back to film acting on a full-time basis.

The interesting thing is, despite her long absence, Roberts' stock hasn't lost its value with viewers, who continue to dote on her. In fact, some of them now admire her even more, because she's put her family at the top of her list of priorities.

They know that the actress took a big risk when she put her stellar career on hold. It was also a big sacrifice to pass up the $25 million talent fee she was getting per film. Very few Hollywood denizens can say no to all those gleaming greenbacks!

And yet, Roberts did. And now, she's come back, looking happier than ever. Money's great, but if you already have a lot of it, it starts to lose its ability to dazzle and control.

Perhaps inspired by Roberts' example, **Nicole Kidman** has also cut back on her film output to pay more attention to her new marriage to country music singer **Keith Urban**.

In addition, even as she continues to star in big-budget movies, Kidman looks for smaller but more artistically rewarding projects to champion.

When she attaches her bankable name to a small movie, it instantly becomes a hot property, so independent filmmakers praise Kidman for making it possible for significant projects to finally see the light of filmic day.

She may not make millions on those small but important movies, but the psychic satisfaction she derives from them is worth its price in—diamonds!

Are these major stars telling their colleagues in the film biz something? On the local movie front, **Vilma Santos** and **Sharon Cuneta** also went on extended leave from their careers as superstars to have children, and the happy results are there for all to see.

What price success over personal happiness and service to others? What, indeed?

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DORIS Bigornia on board in "Birada," a radio commentary on DZXL.

RUDY ESPERAS

A new prime time tandem

By Pocholo Concepcion

THE HOTTEST RAdio commentators work in pairs. Ted Failon and Korina Sanchez are on DZMM, Arnold Clavio and Ali Sotto are on DZBB.

Yet another tandem has been formed to make noise on the prime time 8:30 to 10 a.m. slot, and the names are very familiar especially to "TV Patrol" viewers.

The program "Birada," featuring Doris Bigornia and Erwin Tulfo, Monday to Friday on DZXL 558 AM, has been on the air for only a year. But audience response is reportedly enthusiastic—judging from the text messages the anchors have been receiving.

This is not the first time that Doris and Erwin are doing a radio program, having had a previous stint on DZMM. "But this is different," Doris says of 'Birada,' "*kasi* aside from daily *siya*, we rely on text messages *na talagang marami*. We get an average of 1,000 text messages a day," says Doris. "*Pati kami nagugulat. Pag galit na galit kami, gustung gusto ng mga tao—lalo na pag binabanatan ang gobyerno, mga* 1,300. *Ang pinakamataas na* record *yata namin,* 1,500."

"Birada," a colloquial Tagalog term equivalent to "hit," is a commentary on the most pressing issues of the day, made more entertaining because Doris and her partner pull no punches. It attracts mostly the masses.

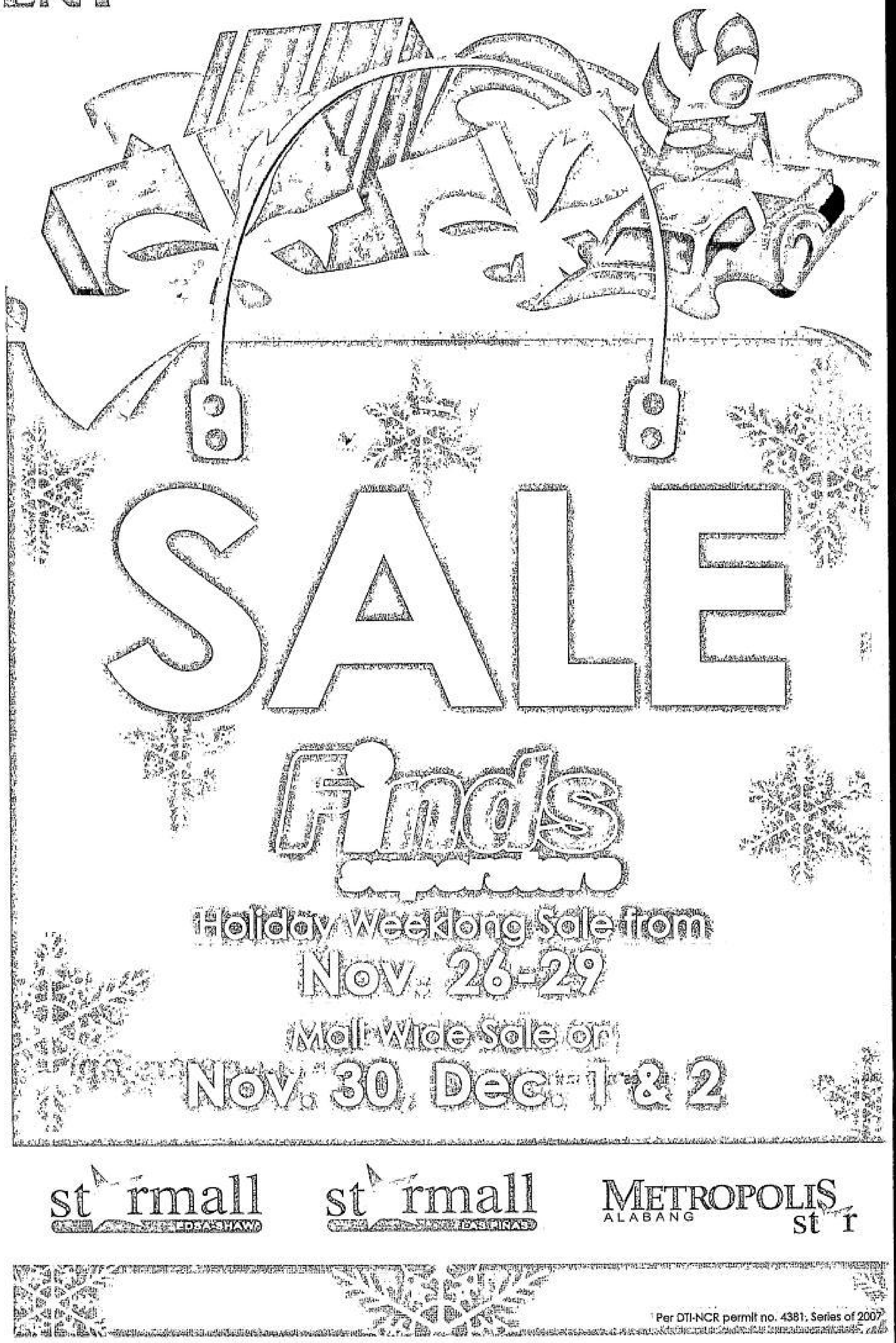
Hot topics

What messages do they send?

Doris: "*Nung una, puro mga pabati, may* birthday, *kumusta kay ganyan. Pero ngayon, kung ano na talaga yung* issue, *nagre-*react *sila. Ang gustung-gusto nilang* topic, *kahirapan at si* (President) Gloria. *May* sense *naman ang tine-*text *nila.*"

If people are glad that Doris is back in media, she herself is thankful she gets to do what she loves most. She comes from a family of journalists. Amante Bigornia, her father, was a newspaper columnist.

A NEW/ G2



SALE
Finds
Holiday Weeklong Sale from
Nov. 26-29
Mall Wide Sale on
Nov. 30, Dec. 1 & 2
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METROPOLIS ALABANG star
Per DTI-NCR permit no. 4381, Series of 2007

RP preem for Diaz's 'Encantos'

"KAGADANAN SA Banwaan ning Mga Engkanto" (Death in the Land of Encantos), Lav Diaz's new nine-hour film will have its Philippine premiere from ten in the morning to seven in the evening on Nov. 29 at Cine Adarna of the University of the Philippines in Diliman.

"Encantos" won the Golden Lion Special Mention award in the Horizons Documentary section of the prestigious Venice Film Festival in Italy.

"Encantos" is a mixture of documentary and fiction. It tells the story of Benjamin Agusan (Roeder Camanag), a poet who returns to his hometown in Padang, Bicol in the aftermath of the destruction wrought by typhoon Reming late last year.

The film was written, photographed, and edited by Diaz , and also stars Angeli Bayani, Perry Di

RP PREEM/ G4

Outside,
the nightly traffic
roars and rumbles.
A dog barks at the cat
he will never catch.
A neighbor yells for
her son to come home.

You open a bottle
of Novellino.

Suddenly,
your place becomes
the most romantic
of settings.

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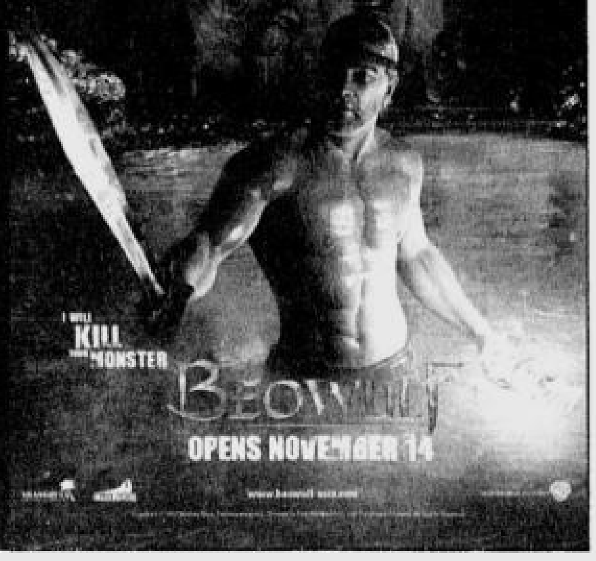

METRO MANILA

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BEOWULF 3D Admission Price: P400
12:30 PM • 3:00 PM • 7:00 PM • 9:30 PM
DEEP SEA 3D Admission Price: P250
11:00 AM • 5:30 PM
1 ENCHANTED
2 BEOWULF
3 HITMAN
4 BOOGEYMAN 2
5 THE NANNY DIARIES
6 ONE MORE CHANCE
PREMIERE CINEMA
ONE MORE CHANCE
CENTERSTAGE
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BEOWULF
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1 BEOWULF (DIGITAL 3D)
2 THE GAME PLAN
3 HITMAN
4 ONE MORE CHANCE
5 HITMAN
6 BEOWULF
7 ONE MORE CHANCE
8 ENCHANTED
9 THE NANNY DIARIES/ 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
10 BOOGEYMAN 2
11 THE GAME PLAN
12 ONE MORE CHANCE

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
1 ENCHANTED
2 HIDE & SEEK
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 HITMAN
5 ENCHANTED
6 RESIDENT EVIL 3
7 LIONS FOR LAMBS
8 BOOGEYMAN 2
9 BEOWULF
10 ONE MORE CHANCE
11 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
12 THE GAME PLAN

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
1 LIONS FOR LAMBS
2 ONE MORE CHANCE
3 THE GAME PLAN
4 HITMAN
5 HIDE & SEEK
6 BOOGEYMAN 2
7 BEOWULF
8 ONE MORE CHANCE
9 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
10 THE GHOST SON
11 ENCHANTED
12 THE NANNY DIARIES

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 HITMAN
2 ENCHANTED
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 BEOWULF

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
1 RESERVED
2 BEOWULF
3 HITMAN
4 BOOGEYMAN 2
5 ENCHANTED
6 ONE MORE CHANCE

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975
1 BEOWULF
2 ONE MORE CHANCE
3 HITMAN
4 ENCHANTED

SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888
1 HITMAN
2 BEOWULF
3 ENCHANTED
4 ONE MORE CHANCE
5 THE NANNY DIARIES
6 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
7 BOOGEYMAN 2
8 HIDE & SEEK
9 WE OWN THE NIGHT

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 HITMAN
2 THE GAME PLAN
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 ENCHANTED
5 BEOWULF
6 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
7 THE NANNY DIARIES
8 LIONS FOR LAMBS
9 BOOGEYMAN 2
10 HIDE & SEEK

NOW OPEN
SM SUPERCENTER MUNTINLUPA 862 5693
1 ONE MORE CHANCE
2 ENCHANTED
3 HITMAN
4 BEOWULF

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
1 BEOWULF
2 HITMAN
3 WE OWN THE NIGHT
4 ONE MORE CHANCE
5 ENCHANTED
6 RESERVED
7 BOOGEYMAN 2
8 HIDE & SEEK
9 ONE MORE CHANCE
10 THE GAME PLAN
11 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
12 THE NANNY DIARIES

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917
1 ENCHANTED
2 HITMAN
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 BEOWULF

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With A Chip
On His Shoulder
ENCHANTED
Distributed by Buena Vista International

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NOW SHOWING

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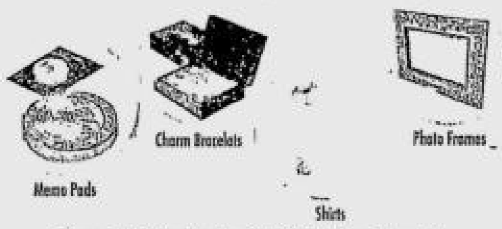

Promo period is from November 21 to 27 (Metro Manila branches)
and November 23 to 29 (Provincial branches).
Photo may vary from actual prize. Please see banners and leaflets for more details.
Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 5804 Series of 2007

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1 ENCHANTED
2 THE GAME PLAN
3 HITMAN
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6 ONE MORE CHANCE
7 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
8 BOOGEYMAN 2

SM CITY MARILAO (044)9332013-17
1 ENCHANTED
2 ONE MORE CHANCE
3 BALLS OF FURY
4 LIONS FOR LAMBS

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1 ENCHANTED
2 ONE MORE CHANCE
3 HITMAN
4 BEOWULF

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4333301-04
1 BEOWULF
2 LIONS FOR LAMBS
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 ENCHANTED

NOW OPEN
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1 ENCHANTED
2 BEOWULF
3 ONE MORE CHANCE

SM CITY LIPA (043) 784-0187
1 EL CANTANTE
2 ONE MORE CHANCE
3 ENCHANTED
4 30 DAYS OF NIGHT

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)9637681-85
1 HITMAN
2 ENCHANTED
3 BEOWULF
4 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
5 ONE MORE CHANCE
6 ONE MORE CHANCE

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5340811
1 ENCHANTED
2 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 BEOWULF

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7106977-80
1 ONE MORE CHANCE
2 ENCHANTED
3 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
4 BEOWULF

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197838-39
1 ENCHANTED
2 ONE MORE CHANCE
3 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
4 BEOWULF

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45
1 BEOWULF
2 ENCHANTED
3 UNREST
4 HITMAN
5 ONE MORE CHANCE
6 ONE MORE CHANCE

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04
1 ENCHANTED
2 ONE MORE CHANCE
3 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
4 BALLS OF FURY

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998
1 BEOWULF
2 THE NANNY DIARIES
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 UNREST
5 BALLS OF FURY
6 ENCHANTED

SM CAGAYAN DE ORO (088)859-2884
1 KUNG FU FIGHTER
2 ONE MORE CHANCE
3 LIONS FOR LAMBS
4 ENCHANTED

VISAYAS
MINDANAO

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422
1 ATAUL FOR RENT
2 THE GHOST SON
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 ENCHANTED
5 BEOWULF
6 EL CANTANTE
7 RESERVED
8 RESERVED

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876
1 HITMAN
2 ENCHANTED
3 BEOWULF
4 MR. WOODCOCK
5 THE GHOST SON
6 ATAUL FOR RENT
7 BALLS OF FURY
8 ONE MORE CHANCE

SM CITY BACOLOD (034) 708 1010
1 ONE MORE CHANCE
2 ENCHANTED
3 BEOWULF
4 BALLS OF FURY

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1 ENCHANTED
2 HITMAN
3 BEOWULF
4 ONE MORE CHANCE
PREMIERE
ENCHANTED

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(Pasay) tel 833.3290 / 833.3274
1 ONE MORE CHANCE
2 ENCHANTED
3 GREEN PARADISE

Center Mall Cinema
Baguio Center Mall, Magsaysay Avenue (Baguio City) tel (074)- (4449346)
1 ENCHANTED
2 ONE MORE CHANCE

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03
1 ENCHANTED
2 HITMAN
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 BEOWULF

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007
1 ONE MORE CHANCE
2 THE SEEKER: DARK IS RISING

CINEMA 2000
Cinema 2000 Waltermart Makati
Waltermart Center, Chino Roces Ave. cor. Antonio Arnaiz Pio del Pilar, Makati City
Tel 816.4214 / 816.4216
1 BEOWULF
2 ENCHANTED
3 HITMAN
4 ONE MORE CHANCE

EASTWOOD CINEMAS
(Eastwood City Walk 2, Eastwood City E. Rodriguez Jr. Ave (C-5) Quezon City) tel 687.4963 or 72
1 BEOWULF
2 ENCHANTED
3 HITMAN
4 ONE MORE CHANCE

starmall
(Mandaluyong) tel. 7268150
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 ENCHANTED
5

metropolis star cinema
www.clickthecity.com.ph
(ALABANG) tel. 8504288, 8433094
1 GREEN PARADISE
2 ENCHANTED
3 HITMAN
4 ONE MORE CHANCE

CINEMA 2000
Movie Theatres of the New Millenium

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383
1 ENCHANTED
2 ONE MORE CHANCE
3 BEOWULF
4

THEATRES
1 ONE MORE CHANCE
2 LIONS FOR LAMBS
3 30 DAYS OF NIGHT

Cinema 2000 Pavilion Mall
(Biñan) tel. (049) 4111146
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

PACIFIC MALL LUCENA CINEMAGIC
Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-5271
ONE MORE CHANCE
ENCHANTED

Cinema 2000 Cinemagix
(Urdaneta) tel(075) 568.6771
1 ONE MORE CHANCE
2 ENCHANTED
3 30 DAYS OF NIGHT

Cinema 2000 Metrotown
(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729
1 ONE MORE CHANCE
2 LUST CAUTION
3 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
4 BALLS OF FURY

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72
1 GAME PLAN
2 ONE MORE CHANCE
3 BEOWULF
4 HITMAN
5 ENCHANTED
6 HITMAN
7 ENCHANTED
8 RESERVED
9 ONE MORE CHANCE
10 GREEN PARADISE

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Plaridel) tel (044) 795.3320
1 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
2 ONE MORE CHANCE
3 ENCHANTED

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Gapan) tel. (044) 4867736
1 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
2 ONE MORE CHANCE

Lianas Cinema
(Pasig) tel 640.4746
1 UNREST
2 GREEN PARADISE

Blue Wave MARIKINA
Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927
1 HITMAN
2 GREEN PARADISE
3 ENCHANTED
4 ONE MORE CHANCE

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276
1 UNREST
2 NAKAW NA SANDALI
3 KANGKONG
4 GREEN PARADISE

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202
1 ONE MORE CHANCE
2 TUKSO
3 ENCHANTED
4 GREEN PARADISE
5 ATAUL FOR RENT

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 7334228
1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 ONE MORE CHANCE
5 BEOWULF

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790
1 ENCHANTED
2 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
3 GREEN PARADISE
4 ONE MORE CHANCE

MARKETPLACE
Mandaluyong
tel 533.3851 / 533.3856
1 ONE MORE CHANCE
2 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
3 GHOST SON
4

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029
1 GREEN PARADISE
2

MOVIES / SCHEDULES / PRICES SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE

Silence r

GOT A CALL FROM **DENNIS TRILLO** and his manager Popoy C. way past midnight last Friday. Dennis sounded drained but relieved. He finally opened up on **Carlene Aguilar** and **Cristine Reyes** who figured in a controversy over him.

The two women have patched things up. Cristine is withdrawing the slander case she filed against Carlene. *"Para akong nabunutan ng tinik. Ayoko talagang umabot pa sa korte ang isyu,"* Dennis revealed. "For the sake of my son, *gusto ko* peace *kaming lahat.*"

For the past days, he thought silence was his best defense but this was misinterpreted by some people as a sign of cowardice. "Less talk, less mistakes. *Tahimik man ako noon hindi ibig sabihin wala akong ginagawa* privately *para maayos lahat.*"

So where is his heart right now? "In limbo (laughs). I wanna be single *na muna* and focus on my son."

Peace could not have come at a better time than now that Christmas is near. Will Carlene and Cristine also keep the spirit of "sharing" (Dennis) alive this holiday season?

Piolo, a decade after

Piolo Pascual celebrates a colorful decade in show biz at the Araneta Coliseum on Nov. 30 via ASAP Live and Star Records' production of the concert "Ten Piolo Pascual." (For tickets, call 9115555.)

It will be a trip down memory lane as PJ presents his journey to where he is now—a multimedia icon, a bankable actor and sought-after concert artist. His coffee table book "Believing" will also be launched.

PJ has come a long, hard way since his "That's Entertainment" days. He is living proof that genuine talent not only survives intrigues but prevails.

Lovers?

This pic of **Billy Crawford** with the choreographer of his GMA show "Move," French girl **Maryss**, was taken at a dive bar in Studio City, Los Angeles, last Nov. 19 and has piqued my curiosity.

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

It was labe
king of the
steps to l'An

First musi
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schedule
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ABS-CBN
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Awards' H
Show. Lates

rmn NETWORK

WITH new team mate Erwin Tulfo. They are up against tested duos Korina Sanchez-Ted Failon and Ali Sotto-Arnold Clavio.

RUDY ESPERAS

A new prime…

From page G1

Doris took up Communication Arts at Maryknoll. (*"Hindi pa Miriam ang pangalan ha, ibig sabihin ganu'n na ako katanda,"* she jokes.) After graduation, she was asked to do on-the-job training at TV station MBS 4. She says she really wanted to learn editing, but was assigned by her boss, Rod Reyes, to the news department, where she rose from the ranks, from production assistant to junior reporter and senior reporter until the Edsa revolt.

ABS-CBN stints

Jobless for a few months, Doris applied at ABS-CBN when it reopened and was hired. After two years, she resigned due to a conflict with a producer, worked in NHK as a foreign correspondent, but was asked to return to ABS-CBN by Danny Buenafe and Dong Puno in 1999. She was assigned to the news desk until the kidnappings in Mindanao broke out and Angelo Castro sent her to cover these stories—the first woman reporter to have done so.

In May 2006, Doris ended her tenure at ABS-CBN, went back to NBN 4 but resigned again in December. A single parent, Doris took a six-month sabbatical from broadcasting to spend more time with her two children, Nicole, 15, and Lorenzo Roel, 12.

Now that she's back, although in a different medium, are there any new insights she has gained?

"I found out," Doris replies, "that in radio, *sasabihin mo yung nararamdaman mo,* you just have to be true to yourself *kasi mahahalata ng* listener *mo 'yan e* … I'm able to express myself better, freely. *Ibang* level *ng* career *ko 'to, hindi na nag*re-report, *nagko-komentaryo na ko. Meron akong* power *na mag*-influence *ng* thinking *ng masa, pero kaakibat non yung responsibilidad naman, na hindi lang banat nang banat, dapat merong pinanghahawakan kung bakit ganon ang* stand *ko* on a certain issue …"

At the moment, Doris seems to be having the time of her life as a broadcaster. DZXL's management is apparently happy, too, because the advertising load in "Birada" is up. Listeners e-mail from as far as Illinois, Japan, Korea and Saudi Arabia. (The program is heard on the Internet through live audio streaming at www.rmn.com.ph.)

Before saying goodbye, Doris makes a parting shot:

*"Kating-kati akong mag*reporter *uli, kaso* radio commentary *itong binigay at hindi ko gamay ang radyo. Napakalaking* challenge *na itapat sa dalawang malalakas na programa. Pero eto na, sige, sugod!"*

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

ot Dennis Trillo’s best defense

ed “Sweethearts.” Has the
lance floor found the right
our?

al

nga took her adorable
 to watch her very first mu-
cal.” “She remained focused
the show and had no melt-
performance was going on,”
om said. “Let the indoctrina-
(laughs). Seriously now, I
 develop even this early an
 for the performing arts and
music. But I don’t intend to
hape her path, career-wise.
That’s for her to figure out.”

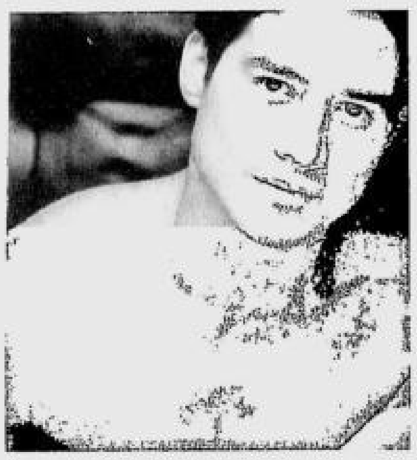
Truly, our kids are not things to be molded but persons to be unfolded. With an incredible mom like Lea behind her, how can Nic not shine, too?

Fallen princess

Could it be true that **Angelika de la Cruz** is so insecure of co-star **Kristine Hermosa** in “Prinsesa ng Banyera,” which is why she opted to leave the show and
MA 7?
der puts it, “Angelika
the middle of taping
hen she suddenly de-
ove to GMA. *Kaya*
atayin ang character
e, she asked the di-
 could have Wednes-
 she could tape her
GMA, when every
 talagaang taping
ila for *‘Banyera.’*
delicadeza?”
r next *teleserye* should
insesa ng mga Ingra-

y

s “Abt Ur Luv (ur Lyf
rdays, 10 a.m., cele-
rst anniversary with
 episode “Star Mag-
 “Grease” and “High
ical.” Perfect timing,
 won the recent Star
est Youth-Oriented
 additions to the cast


PIOLO Pascual

BILLY Crawford and Maryss

are **Alfonso Martinez**, Be Bench winner **Carlo Guevarra** and funnyman **Empoy**. More “kilig” episodes are lined up as love is in and *on* the air.

One-man show

Catch **Ronino Quinto**’s awesome one-man show “Mystical Sierra Madre” at Heritage Art Center, 4th level Megamall.

Blessings Bazaar

Come to the Blessings Bazaar at Wack Wack Golf and Country Club on Dec. 1 and 2. Some of the exhibitors in the 150 booths selling unique items are show biz personalities like **Mylene Dizon** and **Erika Fife**. It also has a kiddie corner with glitter tattoos and face painting, plus delicacies from all over the country. For details e-mail kmarketing@yahoo.com. Find all your ChristMUSTS there!

E-mail wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com.

WHY NOT? A couple dances a tango in front of the coffin of Spanish actor, film director and writer Fernando Fernan-Gomez at Madrid’s Espanol theater on Friday. Fernan-Gomez, 86, died Nov. 21 after a long illness.
REUTERS

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BONGGANG-BONGGA! SOBRANG SAYA!
PREMIERE AT SM MEGAMALL CINEMA 10
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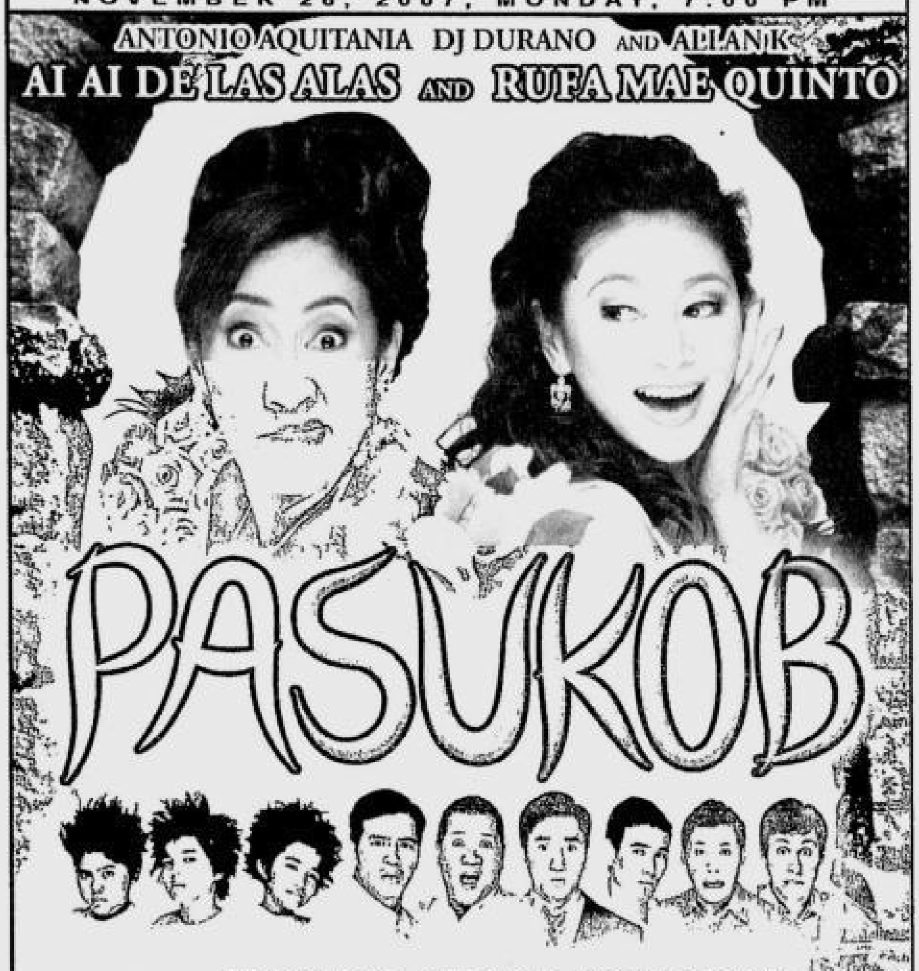
ANTONIO AQUITANIA DJ DURANO AND ALLAN K
AI AI DE LAS ALAS AND RUFA MAE QUINTO



STARRING: RHAP SALAZAR PAUL SALAS JOSHUA CADELIÑA
SPECIAL APPEARANCE: EUGENE DOMINGO CHOKOLEIT DEBRALIZ MAHAL
AND JOHN “SWEET” LAPUZ PBB HOUSEMATES: NEL BODIE ROBERT
OctoArts FILMS
DIRECTED BY
WENN V. DERAMAS
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iFM 93.9

AT THE CINEMAS

THX

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GLORIETTA 1	1 ENCHANTED	2 HITMAN	3 BEOWULF	4 ONE MORE CHANCE
GLORIETTA 4	1 ONE MORE CHANCE	2 BEOWULF	3 THX HITMAN GUARANTEED SEATS	
	4 THE NANNY DIARIES / ONE MORE CHANCE	5 ENCHANTED	6 ENCHANTED	7 THE GAMEPLAN
GREENBELT 1	1 HITMAN	2 ENCHANTED		
GREENBELT 3	1 THX HITMAN GUARANTEED SEATS	2 THX ENCHANTED GUARANTEED SEATS		
	3 ENCHANTED GUARANTEED SEATS	4 SUPERBAD GUARANTEED SEATS	5 BEOWULF GUARANTEED SEATS	
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	1 THX ENCHANTED	2 HITMAN		
	3 ONE MORE CHANCE	4 ENCHANTED	5 BEOWULF	
AYALA CENTER CEBU	1 ENCHANTED	2 HITMAN	3 ONE MORE CHANCE	4 BEOWULF
MARKET! MARKET!	1 ONE MORE CHANCE	2 BEOWULF		
	3 THE NANNY DIARIES	4 HITMAN	5 ENCHANTED	
TRINOMA • THX Certified • All-Digital Sound • All-Stadium Seating • Computerized Ticketing System • Recliner Seats	1 ONE MORE CHANCE	2 THE GAMEPLAN	3 HITMAN GUARANTEED SEATS	4 BEOWULF GUARANTEED SEATS
	5 THE NANNY DIARIES / ONE MORE CHANCE	6 ENCHANTED	7 THX ENCHANTED GUARANTEED SEATS	

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Greenbelt - 757 4853 to 54
Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; 772 1860
Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc. 324
Market! Market! - 886 7519
TriNoma - 901 3000

Ayala Malls

glorietta	Sounds of Christmas: Christmas Chorale feat. Phil. Jesuit Community November 24; 6pm; Glorietta 4 Park
GREENBELT	Holiday Open Concert November 24 & Dec 2; 8pm; Greenbelt 3 Park
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	Seussical The Musical November 23 to 25; 11am, 3pm & 6pm; Activity Center
AYALA CENTER CEBU	Metrobank Car Event November 24 to 25; Activity Center, Paseos and Rotunda Area
MARKET! MARKET!	Lifestyle and Vanity Outlet Sale November 19 to 23; Activity Center
Greenbelt Onstage	Repertory Philippines presents FIDDLER ON THE ROOF November 9 - December 16, 2007 For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710 or visit www.repertory-philippines.com
Ayala MUSEUM	WATER: THE MEDIUM by Juvenal Sanso November 24 to January 13, 2008; Ground Floor Gallery For more info, pls. call 757-7117 to 21 loc. 14 or email museum_inquiry@ayalamuseum.org
TriNoma	Rhythm Academy: Sam Concepcion with the Augustinian Larks December 9; 6pm; Activity Center Rhythm Academy: Pops Fernandez and The UP Cherubim and Seraphim December 16; 6pm; Activity Center

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Concrete choice

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"HOW It's Built: Concrete"

"HOW IT'S Built: Concrete" brings viewers to the break-neck construction of the Burj Dubai, slated to be the world's tallest building when it is completed in 2008, and the batch plants of the Panama Canal at the dawn of a new century.

It also visits the concrete pours of the Hoover Dam and one of the first icons of concrete, the Pantheon in Rome.

The show airs on Nov. 29, 7 p.m. and Nov. 30, 6 p.m. at the National Geographic Channel.

Prime time movies

MGM Channel presents "Where Angels Fear To Tread," a drama of repressed and unleashed sexuality within the British upper class, on Dec. 6 at 9 p.m.

Based on E.M. Forster's first novel, the story follows events after a British widow dallies with, then weds, a young Tuscan while vacationing in Italy.

It stars Rupert Graves, Helena Bonham Carter, Judy Davis and Helen Mirren.

The old-fashioned screwball comedy "Maxie" airs on Dec. 20 at 9 p.m., with Glenn Close.

HELEN Mirren

Deadly criminals

Discovery Channel takes viewers beyond the police tape and deep into the minds of the world's most merciless and deadly criminals in "Most Evil" every Friday, 11 p.m., starting Dec. 7.

Columbia University's forensic psychiatrist Dr. Michael Stone will use his "scale of evil," which has never been profiled on television, to rank and measure the evil found within the infamous.

It will also feature rarely seen archival footage of courtroom and news statements and exclusive up-close interviews with convicted killers from behind prison bars.

Among the criminal masterminds profiled include alleged "Lipstick Murderer" Bill Heirens, the real "Natural Born Killer" Charles Starkweather, Gianni Versace murder suspect Andrew Cunanan, Unabomber Ted Kaczynski and New York City's infamous "Son of Sam."

"CONFESSIONAL"

Cinema One fest starts Nov. 30

By Marinel R. Cruz

WRITER-DIRECTOR Rico Maria Ilarde does not mind being called a "horror filmmaker" if the title helps him make more movies.

Ilarde's "Ang Babaeng Putik (2001)," "Sa Ilalim ng Cogon (2005)" and "Shake, Rattle and Roll 2k5 (2005)" all belong to the said genre. His latest, "Altar," also aims to terrify the audience with ghastly and disturbing images.

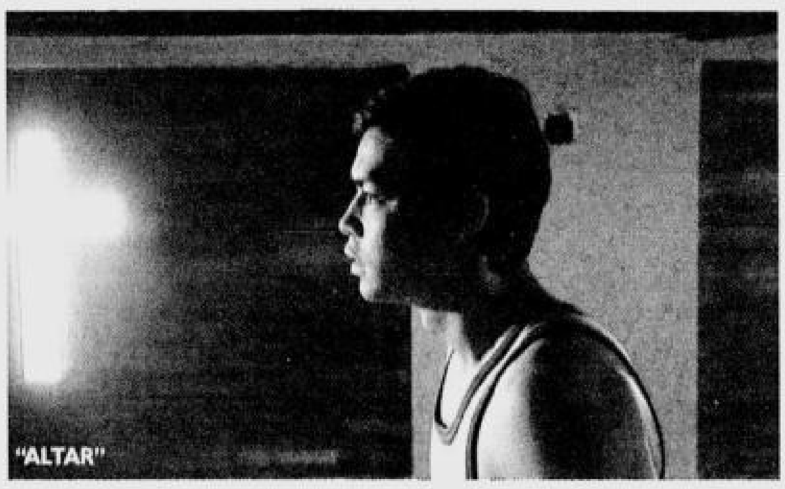
"Altar," featuring Zanjoe Marudo in the lead role, is one of five finalists of the annual Cinema One Originals Digital Film Festival, which will run from Nov. 30 to Dec. 2.

Marudo plays the role of a boxer who quits after inadvertently killing an opponent during a prizefight in the United States. He accepts a job to renovate a house that he slowly discovers to be haunted by the ghost of a young girl. At the basement of this house is a strange altar. Little does his character know that his arrival at the house is not a coincidence.

Said Ilarde, "I first offered this to Regal (Entertainment), which found it too weird, too off-beat. But this is probably the most marketable movie I've made."

"Altar" also stars Nor Domingo, Dimples Romana, Dido dela Paz and Kristalyn Engle. Ilarde co-wrote the screenplay with Mammu Chua.

Based on real life


"ALTAR"

"PRINSESA"

Lawrence Fajardo considers making films an outlet for pent-up emotions. In fact, his film "Princesa," which tackles the nuances of being a parent and an overseas contract worker, is loosely based on his life.

"I am Princess (the film's lead character) in the sense that I am also the child of a man who worked abroad for over 30 years. I know how Princess feels. My father used to be a seafarer. He came home every nine months," Fajardo said.

He said he was sure "Princesa" would make his father proud. "Through Romnick's (Sarmenta) character, I hope viewers get to see what my father went through," said Fajardo.

"Princesa" was originally titled "Sa Ikawalo." It also features Shamaine Buencamino, Archi Adamos, Ermie Concepcion and Christa Joi Reyes. Fajardo participated in last year's competition with his "Raket ni Nanay." His "Kultado" won the Urian Best Short Film Award in 2006.

Jerrold Tarog, musical director of award-winning movies "Kubrador" and "Foster Child," said he made sure not to hire popular actors for his directorial debut, "Confessional."

"People may think this is a true-to-life film," he explained. "The events presented here are based on incidents that have happened to a lot of people."

Set in Cebu during the highly anticipated Sinulog Festival, "Confessional" tells the experience of a small-time filmmaker who witnesses the disclosures of a former politician.

The movie features Cebu-based first-time actors Publio Brioness III, David Barril, Greg Fernandez, Donna Gimeno and Owee Silva. Tarog co-wrote "Confessional" with commercial director Ruel Antipuesto.

Other competing entries in the Cinema One Originals Digital Film Festival are Veronica Velasco and Pablo Biglang-Awa's "Maling Akala" and Adolf Alix's "Tambolista." The finalists will be screened at the Cinema 1 of Trinoma North Edsa Mall, Quezon City and Cinema 1 of Glorietta 4 in Ayala Center, Makati City.

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From page G1

zon, DantePerez, Soliman Cruz, Gemma Cuenca, Sophia Aves, Amalia Virtucio, Juan Francisco Penaranda, Ashleigh Penaranda, and Kalila Aguiloz. Production design is by Dante Perez, and production supervision is by Laurel Lee Penaranda. It is produced by Cine Olivia Pilipinas, Hubert Bals Film, and the Film Development Council of the Philippines.

The premiere is the 9th anniversary presentation of the University of the Philippines' Cinema as Art Movement (CAM), an organization based at the College of Fine Arts in UP Diliman.

Tuesday, November 27, 2007 ★★ 7 sections / Vol. 22 / No. 352 P18 website: www.inquirer.net

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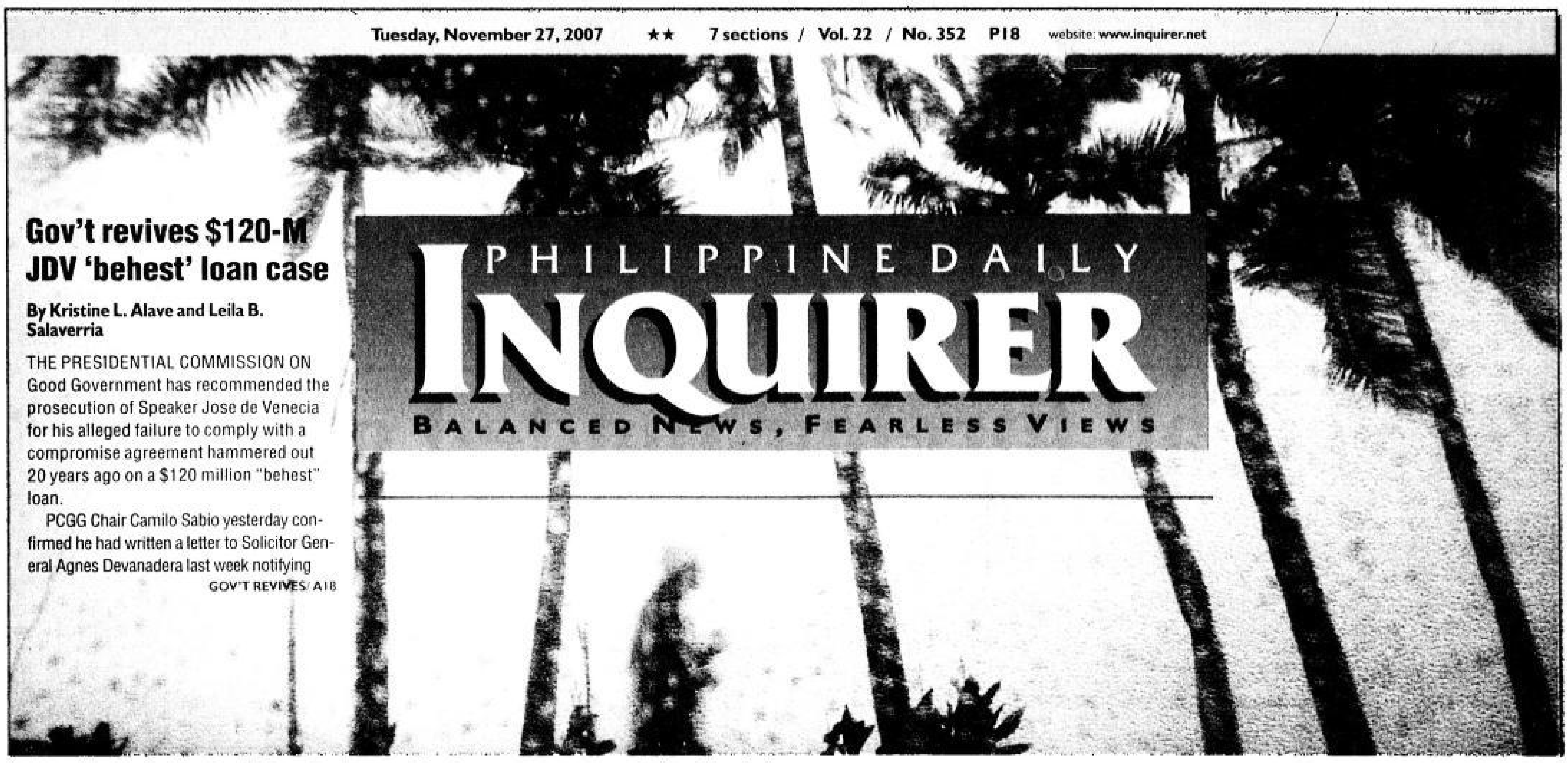


Gov't revives $120-M JDV 'behest' loan case

By Kristine L. Alave and Leila B. Salaverria

THE PRESIDENTIAL COMMISSION ON Good Government has recommended the prosecution of Speaker Jose de Venecia for his alleged failure to comply with a compromise agreement hammered out 20 years ago on a $120 million "behest" loan.

PCGG Chair Camilo Sabio yesterday confirmed he had written a letter to Solicitor General Agnes Devanadera last week notifying

GOV'T REVIVES/ A18

A MAN takes a walk along Manila's Roxas Boulevard on Monday as coconut trees sway in the wind and rain. RAFFY LERMA

2 storms squeeze Luzon

Lawmakers to grill Teves, Ibazeta over power assets

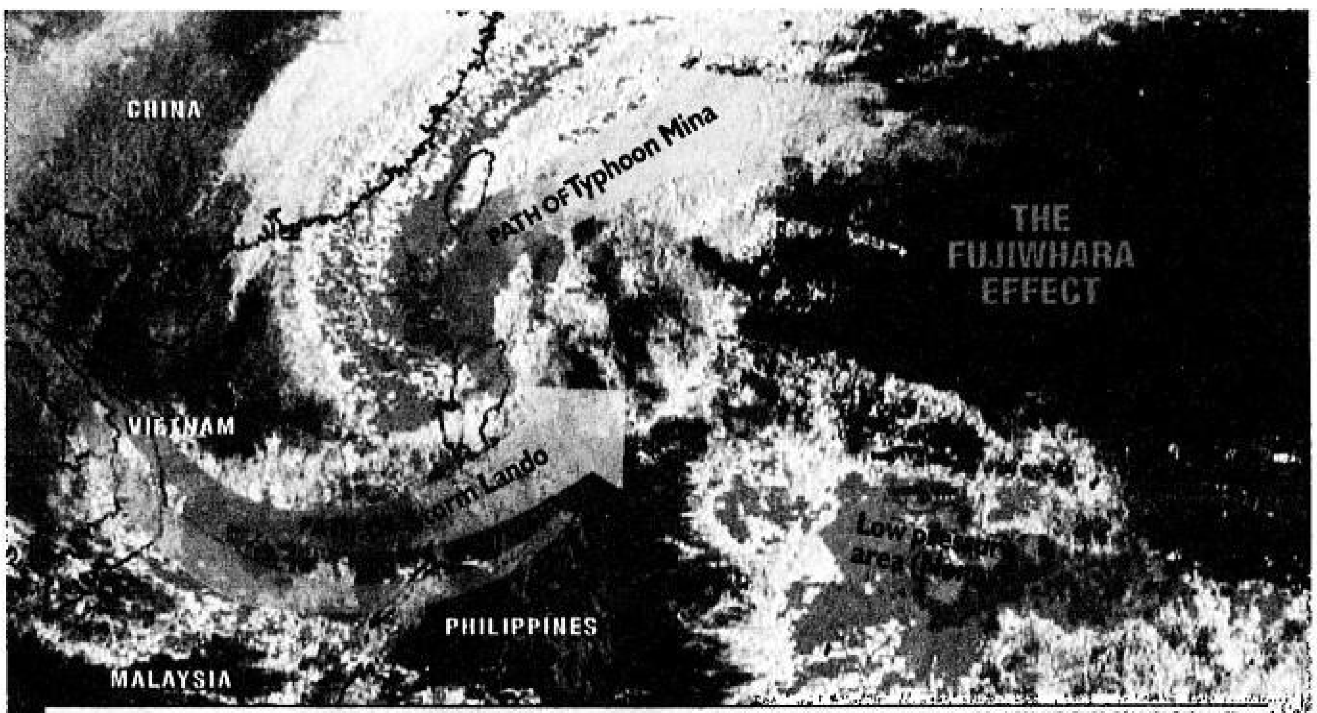
By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

THE JOINT CONGRESSIONAL Power Commission (JCPC) will grill Jose Ibazeta, president of Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM), along with Finance Secretary Margarito Teves next month on the sale of the government's energy assets.

The JCPC wants Ibazeta to answer whether his position as auctioneer of the assets of National Transmission Co. (Transco) has put him in a conflict of interest situation with the emergence of his purported corporate boss, Enrique Razon, as one of the bidders.

Razon, who is close to President Macapagal-Arroyo and her husband Jose Miguel, is chair of

LAWMAKERS/ A18



SOURCES: WEATHER.COM/ PAGASA/ AFP

WHEN TWO STORMS DANCE

THE FUJIWHARA EFFECT DESCRIBES THE rotation of two storms around each other. This phenomenon starts when the storms are about 1,350 km apart.

The storms move about a central point between them, much like two ice skaters spinning about each other. While spinning, the two storms move toward a single direction as one system.

The Fujiwhara Effect is named after Sakuhei Fujiwhara, a former chief of the Central Meteorological Bureau in Tokyo, Japan.

In the 1920s Fujiwhara discovered that when two water vortices (or water whirls) spinning in the same direction came close to each other, they would rotate about a central point.

He also learned that the larger of the two vortices would dominate the smaller one, and would eventually gobble it up.

The Fujiwhara Effect ends when a stronger weather system disturbs the interaction between the two storms, or when one of the two storms weakens, or when the two storms merge.

INQUIRER RESEARCH: CYRIL L. BONABENTE

'Mina' kills 10; 'Lando' makes bizarre return

By TJ Burgonio, Nikko Dizon and Inquirer Northern Luzon

LIKE TWO DANCERS swirling around each other, Typhoon "Mina" yesterday slammed into Isabela and Aurora provinces—as Tropical Storm "Lando" turned around and headed back toward the Philippines, aiming for the Southern Tagalog region.

With Lando's bizarre return, thousands of evacuees who had gone back home in Bicol after Mina passed, headed back for evacuation centers to avoid

2 STORMS/ A6

Roxas takes over LP helm, signals 2010 Palace run

By Dona Pazzibugan and TJ Burgonio

WITH A DISGUISED CAMPAIGN SLOGAN for a backdrop, Sen. Manuel Roxas II yesterday assumed the leadership of the Liberal Party, apparently signaling the launch of his presidential bid in 2010.

LP banners in red, blue and yellow

ROXAS/ A8

Makati Business Club: Palace not doing enough

THE MAKATI BUSINESS CLUB (MBC) yesterday criticized Malacañang for not pushing hard enough for the passage of priority bills considered important in enhancing the country's global competitiveness.

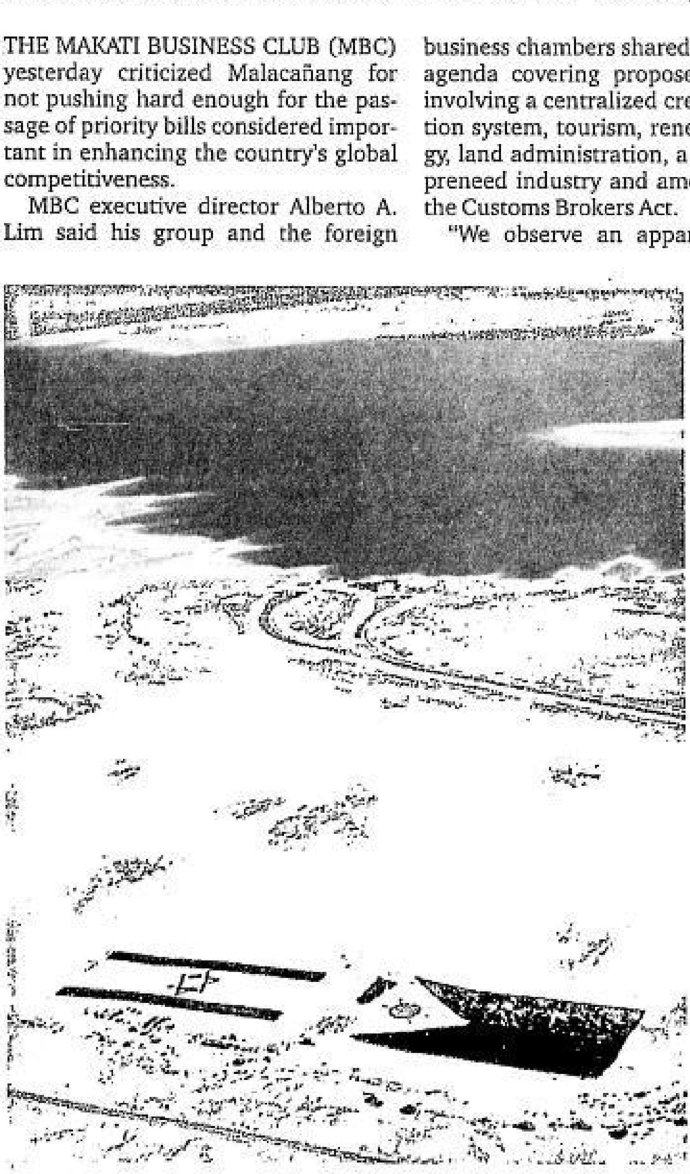
MBC executive director Alberto A. Lim said his group and the foreign business chambers shared a legislative agenda covering proposed measures involving a centralized credit information system, tourism, renewable energy, land administration, a code for the preneed industry and amendments to the Customs Brokers Act.

"We observe an apparent lack of leadership [on the part of] the executive department in having these bills passed ... Maybe (Malacañang) is not pushing hard enough for these bills," Lim said in a phone interview.

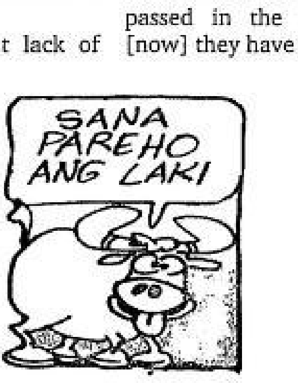
"Some of them actually almost got passed in the 13th Congress, but [now] they have to go through the entire process again," he added.

Lim said the MBC, whose members include not only big local corporations but also major foreign companies belonging to foreign business chambers, had also observed conflicting positions taken by various executive depart-

MAKATI/ A18



ISRAEL'S national flag is displayed beside the Philippine flag on the shore of the Dead Sea on Nov. 25, 2007, marking 50 years of relations between the two countries. REUTERS



Israeli flag world's largest: Filipinos made it

MASADA, ISRAEL—SAME dream, different flag.

Filipino entrepreneur and evangelical Christian Grace Galindez-Gupana, who last year unfurled the biggest Philippine flag which ended up in shreds, is at it again.

This time, she made a giant Israeli flag.

Beneath the ancient Jewish desert strongpoint of Masada, the world's largest flag was unfurled on Sunday, covering a large stretch of sandy hinterland.

Masada, the ancient mountaintop fortress in

ISRAELI/ A8

DISCONNECTS IN EDUCATION

Teachers subsidizing pupils' needs

By Juan Miguel Luz

(Second of three parts)

(Editor's note: The writer is president of the NGO International Institute of Rural Reconstruction and former undersecretary of the Department of Education.)

COMMENTARY

WE TALK ABOUT EDUCATION getting the largest share of our national budget. In truth, the real measure is how much we spend annually per child—which is around $150 (P6,750). Thailand spends more than six times as much at $950; Malaysia 110 times more.

The sad reality is that it is our teachers who are actually subsidizing the education of our children through their low salaries.

In public schools, the starting gross pay for Teacher I this school year was pegged at P9,980 per month. This went up by P1,000 with the 10-percent

TEACHERS/ A8

Raising super bright kids 'enjoyable, humbling'

By TJ Burgonio

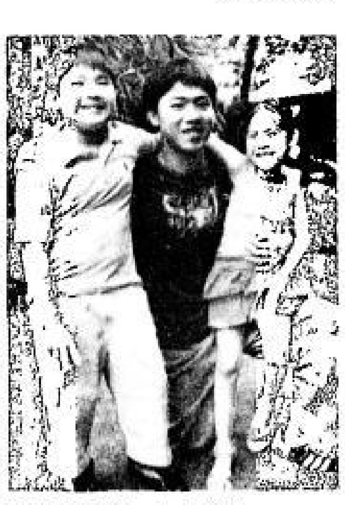
YOU'D THINK JAPANESE BUSINESSMAN Koh Tamura and his Filipino wife Cecile would be used to it by now—being parents to gifted children.

Their eldest child, Cy, 17, composes music at random and Yosh, 10, can memorize the contents of a book while Aya, 6, solves puzzles with ease.

Like most parents, the Tamura couple marvel at their kids' exceptional abilities and revel in their accomplishments. Koh, 71, tries to downplay their children's gifts, but his wife Cecile, 46, talks animatedly about them.

"Being a curious person who wants to perpetually learn about things that I don't know, I should

RAISING/ A18



THE SUPER talented Tamura kids: Yosh, Cy and Aya. RUDY ESPERAS

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Palawan and extreme Northern Luzon will experience stormy weather. Central Luzon will be cloudy with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of Luzon will have rains and gusty winds.

Metro Manila	Cloudy with Rains	**Iloilo/Bacolod**	Partly Cloudy
Baguio	Gusty Winds	**Roxas**	Partly Cloudy
Tuguegarao	Stormy	**Cebu**	Partly Cloudy
Laoag	Stormy	**Tacloban**	Partly Cloudy
Clark Zone	Cloudy with Rains	**Gen. Santos**	Partly Cloudy
Tagaytay	Cloudy with Rains	**Zamboanga**	Partly Cloudy
Legazpi	Partly Cloudy	**Cagayan de Oro**	Partly Cloudy
Calapan	Partly Cloudy	**Davao**	Partly Cloudy

COMPILED BY: SCHATZI QUODALA, PDI RESEARCH/11/26/07 SOURCE: PAGASA

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Second FrontPage

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‘Review all foreign-funded projects’

GMA order to ensure all work free of irregularities after WB fiasco

By Christine O. Avendano and Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

WITH THE WORLD BANK still not moving to lift its suspension of deliberations on the $232-million soft loan intended for Philippine road projects, President Macapagal-Arroyo has issued a string of instructions to ensure that foreign-assisted and funded projects would be free of irregularities.

The instructions, which include a review of the road projects covered by the suspended WB loan, were contained in Administrative Order No. 210.

Cabinet officials, meanwhile, yesterday snubbed the Senate probe of the suspended $232-million WB loan, due to corruption, as they pressed for more time to prepare their defense.

Sen. Loren Legarda, chair of the committee on economic affairs, was visibly irritated by the last-minute decision by the Cabinet members to skip the probe but was relieved that they did not invoke Executive Order 464.

EO 464 prohibits government officials from testifying before congressional committees without the permission of the President.

But Legarda warned that she would hold the Cabinet officials in contempt if they fail to live up to their commitment to attend the next hearing scheduled next month.

Legarda said she received a call from Presidential Management Staff chief Cerge Remonde who cited the “lack of material time” and evacuation efforts for Typhoon “Mina” as the Cabinet secretaries’ main reasons for their absence.

AO No. 210

The President issued AO 210 on Nov. 22, the day Finance Secretary Margarito Teves and WB officials held a joint news conference wherein the WB affirmed its commitment to fund Phase 2 of National Roads Improvement and Management Program (NRIMP) but only after safeguards had been put in place to prevent the recurrence of irregularities.

Under the administrative order titled “Harnessing Government, Civil Society and Sectoral Groups for Transparency and Procurement Process,” Ms Arroyo directed the Pro-Performance System (PPS) and the Procurement Transparency Group (PTG) to review the road projects and “to report to the President.”

The PPS is under the Presidential Management Staff office while the PTG is under the Government Procurement Policy Board, which in turn is under the Department of Budget and Management.

No surprise

Budget Secretary Rolando Andaya said the AO came as no surprise because the President had already given him instructions to conduct a review of the road projects and his office was “coordinating with the WB on the procurement issue.”

“Whether it’s Phase 1 or Phase 2 of the NRIMP, it’s still the procurement process of the WB which would be looked into,” Andaya said in a phone interview, when asked what particular road project in the NRIMP would be subject for review.

Before the WB incident, Andaya said the President had given Cabinet officials instructions “months back” to refine and strengthen the implementation of the procurement law.

In her order, Ms Arroyo asked the Presidential Anti-Graft Corruption to “report on the suspended road projects and consult with the World Bank and other funding agencies on other anomalies to investigate.”

And to ensure that foreign-funded projects would be free of irregularities, the President issued the following directives:

- The PPS and the National Economic and Development Authority must undertake regular consultations with foreign-funding agencies to minimize, uncover and address anomalies in foreign-funded projects;
- The PTG must submit a detailed plan for the deployment of civil society observers in bids and awards committees handling projects worth P100 million or more;
- The GPPB must review regulations, systems and procedures for Official Development Assistance and government-to-government projects and recommend integrity and transparency reforms;
- The DBM must source funds for the investigation of irregularities in foreign-funded infrastructure projects.

WHAT’S INSIDE

TRILLANES wants to call Honasan to the witness stand /A9

AIR FORCE PLANE searching for fishermen missing near Kalayaan isles /A7

PAMPANGA ‘parol’ a big hit with folks in Vienna, Austria /A11

House kills this year’s impeach case vs GMA

By Norman Bordadora and Leila Salaverria

UPHOLDING THE DECISION OF THE COMmittee on justice, the administration-dominated House of Representatives in plenary yesterday formally dismissed an impeachment complaint against President Macapagal-Arroyo, effectively shielding her from further attempts to remove her from office the next 12 months.

Voting 184-1, the House threw out the controversial impeachment complaint filed by lawyer Roel Pulido. Only Laguna Rep. Edgar San Luis, Pulido’s endorser, voted to pursue the complaint. There was one abstention: Nueva Ecija Rep. Edno Joson.

Under House rules, only one impeachment complaint can be filed in a year.

Opposition representatives boycotted the plenary session, accusing Pulido of deliberately filing a lame complaint on orders of Malacañang.

But in an apparently related move, Iloilo Vice Gov. Rolex Suplico brought his rejected impeachment complaint against President Macapagal-Arroyo to the Supreme Court yesterday, asking the court to clarify the constitutional prohibition against multiple complaints.

Suplico had filed an impeachment complaint in September against the Commission of Elections Chair Benjamin Abalos for allegedly bribery in the National Broadband Network deal. He later amended this to include Ms Arroyo but said he was prevented from refiling it because of the Pulido complaint.

It is the position of Suplico and six other petitioners that what is prohibited is the holding of multiple proceedings and not the filing of multiple complaints.

They also asked the high court to overturn the decision of the House of Representatives’ secretary general Roberto Nazareno rejecting their supplemental complaint that would have included President Arroyo in the impeachment case against Abalos.

Suplico’s group said Nazareno overstepped his authority when he refused to transmit the supplemental complaint to the House Speaker so that it could be referred to the committee on justice for proper deliberation.

Joining Suplico in the petition were Harry Roque, Angelito Banayo, Ma. Dominga Padilla, Fr. Joe Dizon, Manuel Baviera and Roel Garcia.

They said several impeachment complaints against the President, including those filed by opposition spokesperson Adel Tamano and former Vice President Teofisto Guingona, should have been considered as one impeachment case against Ms Arroyo.

Pulido’s complaint was subsequently found deficient in substance and dismissed. *With a report from Christian V. Esguerra*

GMA admits to Tondo folk poverty greatest challenge

By Michael Lim Ubac

SIX YEARS AFTER TAKING OVER THE reins of office, President Macapagal-Arroyo candidly admitted yesterday before the urban poor of Tondo in Manila that poverty remained the greatest challenge facing her administration.

“We can’t claim that we have progressed as a nation if we can’t uplift the lives of the poor and the hungry in our society,” President Macapagal-Arroyo said in Filipino.

Amid her plunging approval rating, the President conceded during an informal interaction with residents of Tondo’s Barangay 20, Isla Puting Bato, that her vision of First World status for the country would remain an elusive dream if a huge portion of the population continued to be mired in poverty.

“We must stand by our beliefs and faith. It is our long-term goal to belong with the developed nations in 20 years,” said Ms Arroyo, reiterating the ambitious goal she set for the country in her State of the Nation Address in July.

To do this, the President again emphasized the need to have a strong middle-class, world-class infrastructure and stable government institutions.

The President’s visit came on the heels of a visit paid to Tondo residents by her predecessor, former President Joseph Estrada. Since Ms Arroyo pardoned Estrada after his conviction for plunder, the latter has been making the rounds of poor communities in Metro Manila where he has been warmly received by local residents.

The President has registered an overall disapproval rating of 39 percent, the highest among the country’s top five officials, from July to October, according to the latest Pulse Asia survey.

The survey, which tracks presidential performance and trust ratings, noted that the President’s overall disapproval rating—the level of public appreciation of her work—did not change between July and October.

But her distrust rating increased significantly during the period, increasing by 9 percentage points to 46 percent, Pulse Asia said.

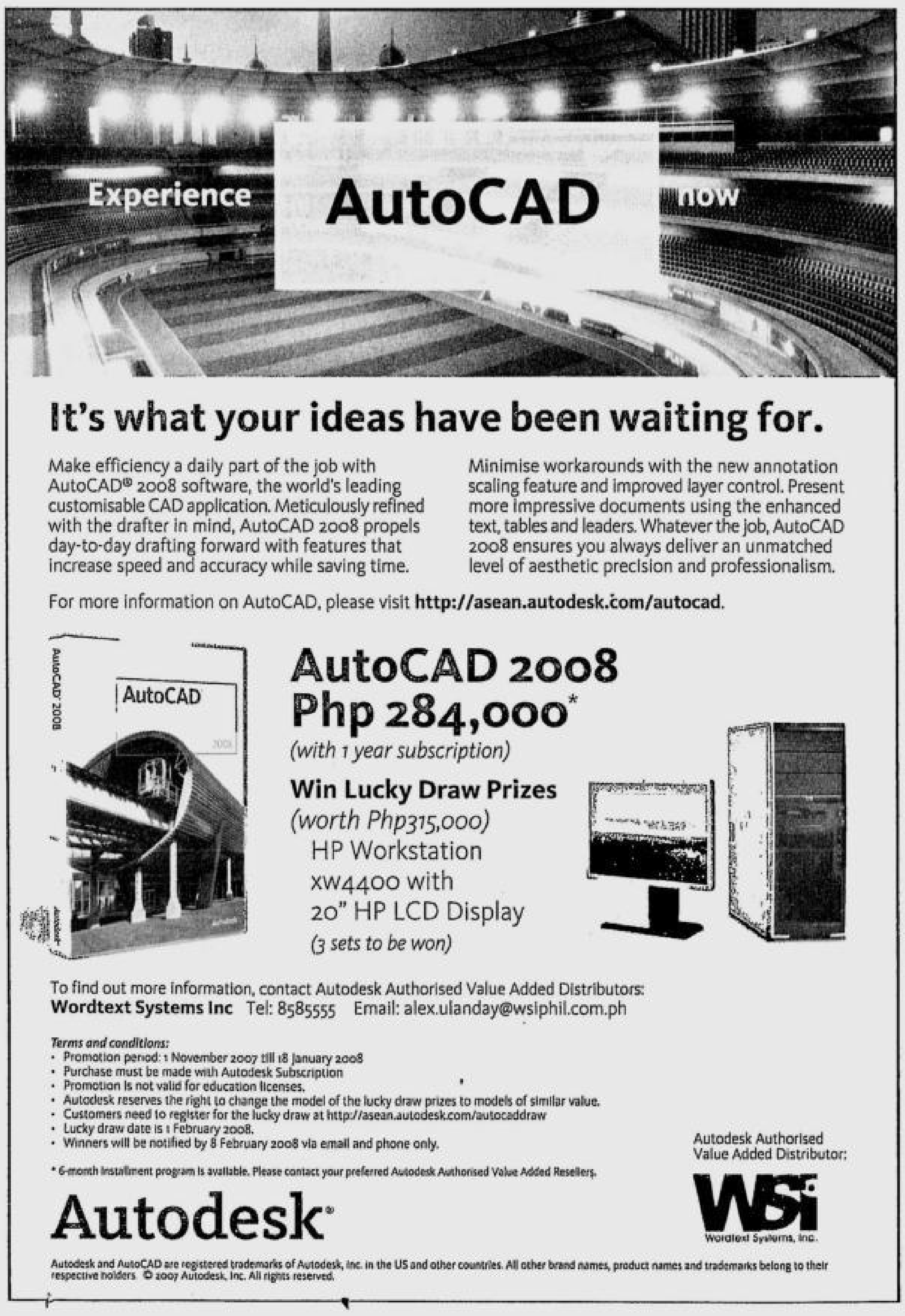
To parry the criticisms that her administration had not made a dent on the poverty incidence, the President argued that the poverty rate had actually gone down after her administration succeeded in producing a million jobs every year since 2001.

“However, we must vigorously talk about the eradication of poverty,” she said before the Tondo residents, many of whom, particularly those residing around the former Smokey Mountain dump, had come to symbolize the poorest of the poor in the country.

She said her administration continued to face the daunting challenge of fulfilling its promise to break the cycle of poverty—the overarching goal contained in her “Roadmap to Fiscal Strength to Fighting Poverty” and the Medium Term Development Plan.

The Medium Term Philippine Development Plan is a detailed roadmap toward achieving the common goal of reducing poverty through jobs creation and enterprise, while the Roadmap to Fiscal Strength calls for balancing the budget, reducing debt and enhancing revenue generation.

The President had earlier said that the “basic goal” of the Medium Term Philippine Development Plan for the period 2004-2010 “is to fight poverty and build prosperity for the greatest number of the Filipino people.” *With a report from Kate V. Pedroso, Inquirer Research*



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Militants take fight vs Jpepa to world

MILITANT GROUPS ARE TAKING THEIR fight against the Japan-Philippines Economic Partnership Agreement (Jpepa) to international forums.

The farmers group Kilusang Magbubukid ng Pilipinas—whose secretary general Danilo Ramos joined the Asian Peasants Coalition (APC) delegation that dialogued with World Trade Organization (WTO) officials in Geneva, Switzerland recently—said the Philippines and other developing countries were warned at the forum against entering into deals that were disadvantageous to their people.

Those opposed to Jpepa have claimed the pact would spell economic disaster for Filipino farmers and fishermen.

The main opposition, however, has been against provisions that would allow toxic waste from Japan to enter the Philippines.

Sri Lanka forum

The fishermen's group Pambansang Lakas ng Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) said it would raise the Jpepa issue at the 4th General Assembly of the World Forum of Fisher Peoples (WFFP) in Sri Lanka this week.

Pamalakaya information officer Gerry Albert Corpuz told reporters the group had prepared a resolution urging fisherfolk and non-government organizations around the world to support the Filipino fishermen opposed to the "one-sided" economic treaty that would favor Japanese transnational fishing interests.

The resolution will be submitted to the Senate, which has set its next hearing on the ratification of Jpepa on Dec. 13.

In a statement from Geneva, Ramos, concurrent APC secretary general, said he and his deputy Poguri Chennaiah faced WTO deputy director general Harsha Singh last week to talk about the WTO's "Aid for Trade" program.

The program was first proposed at a WTO ministerial summit in Hong Kong in 2005, wherein richer countries would enter into economic pacts with poorer ones but at the same time help the latter develop their productive capacity.

Japanese interests

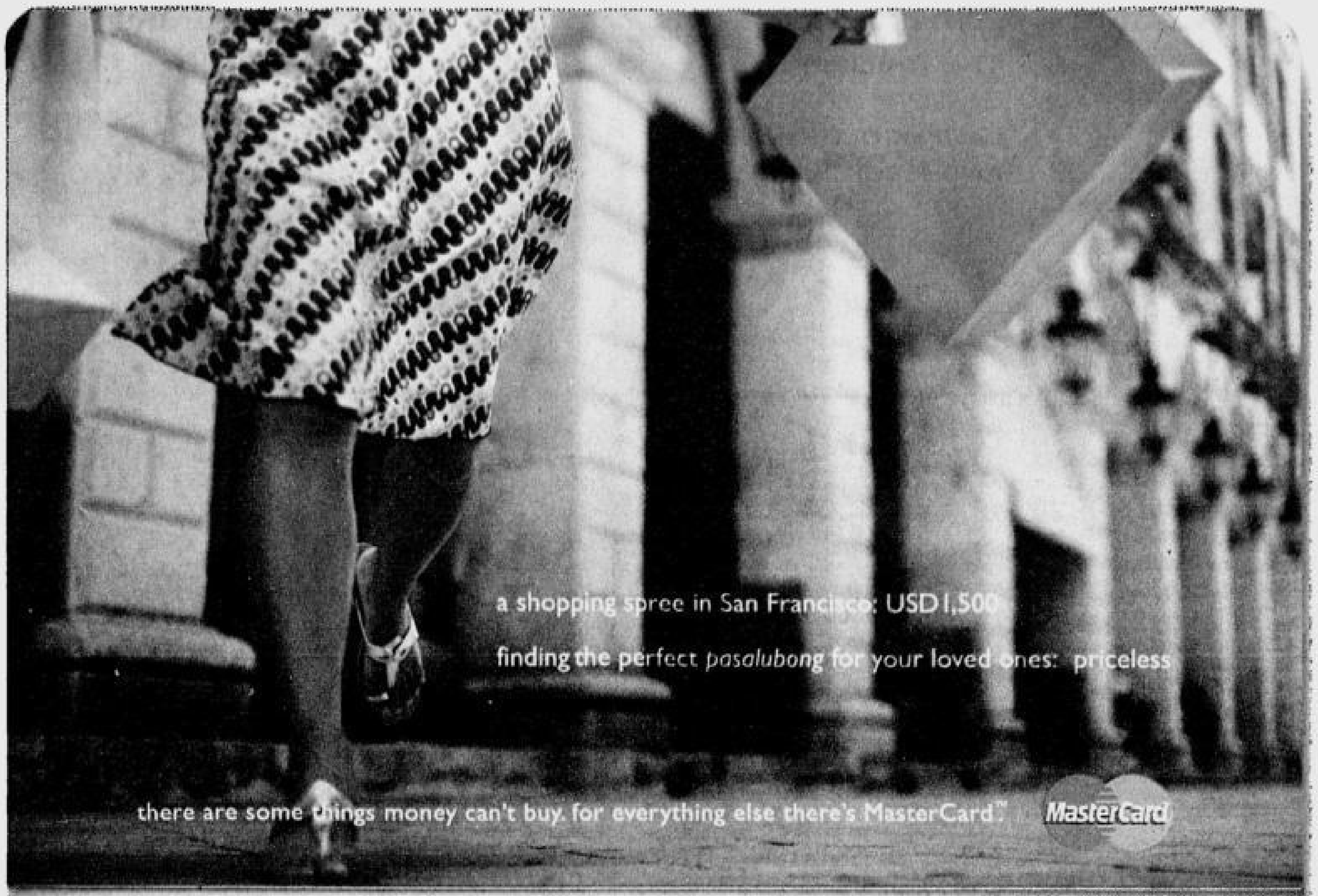
APC is opposed to "conditionalities" that the rich countries include in "Aid for Trade" deals, such as Jpepa, which Ramos said favor Japanese interests.

They said the Philippines and other Asian countries entered into similar trade treaties in the past but their people ended up exploited by the donors and still economically backward.

Singh, however, said the WTO should not be blamed for the farmers' woes.

"It's your government's fault that farmers in your country are suffering. It entered into deals and agreements [such as] the WTO, well aware of its implications," Ramos quoted Singh as saying.

Jerome Aning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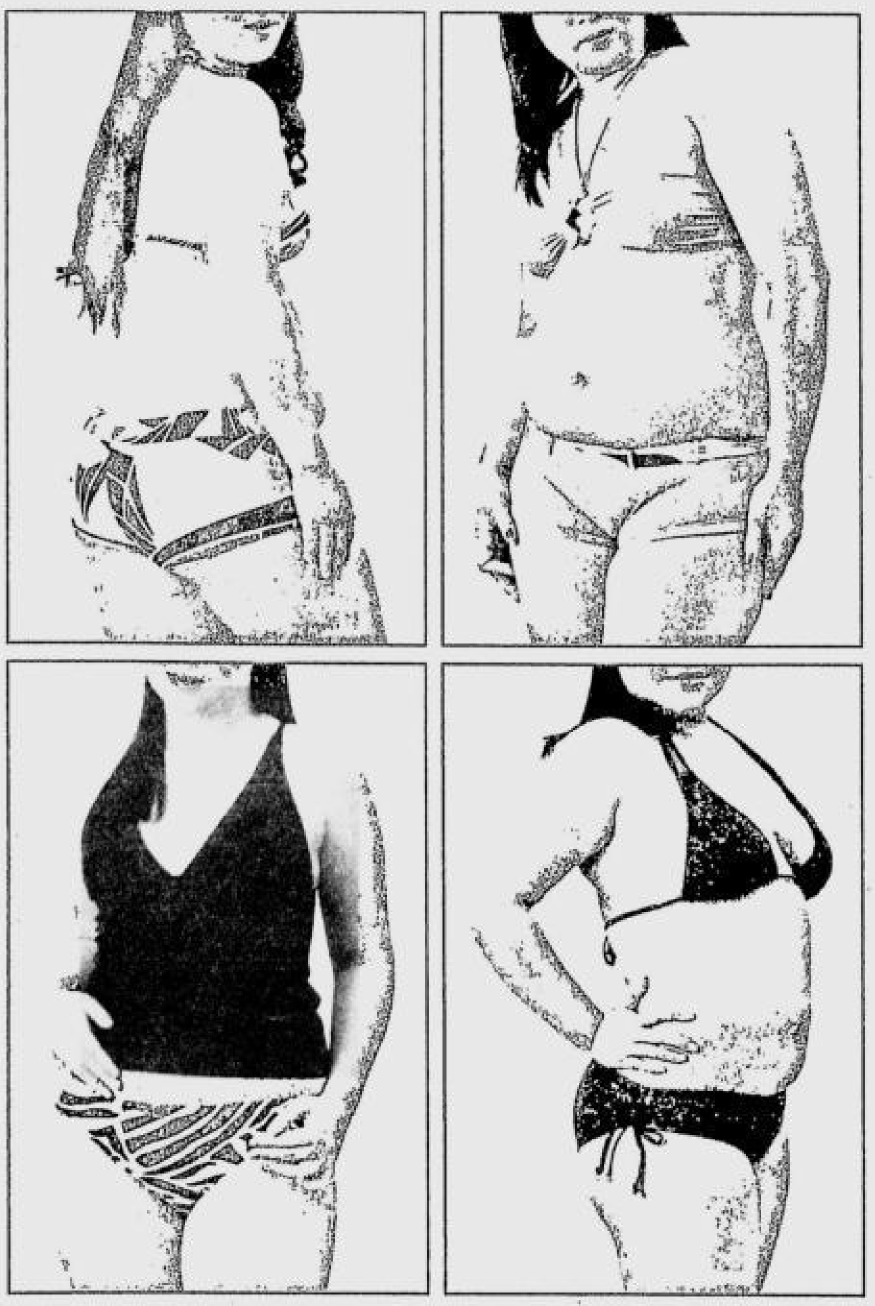

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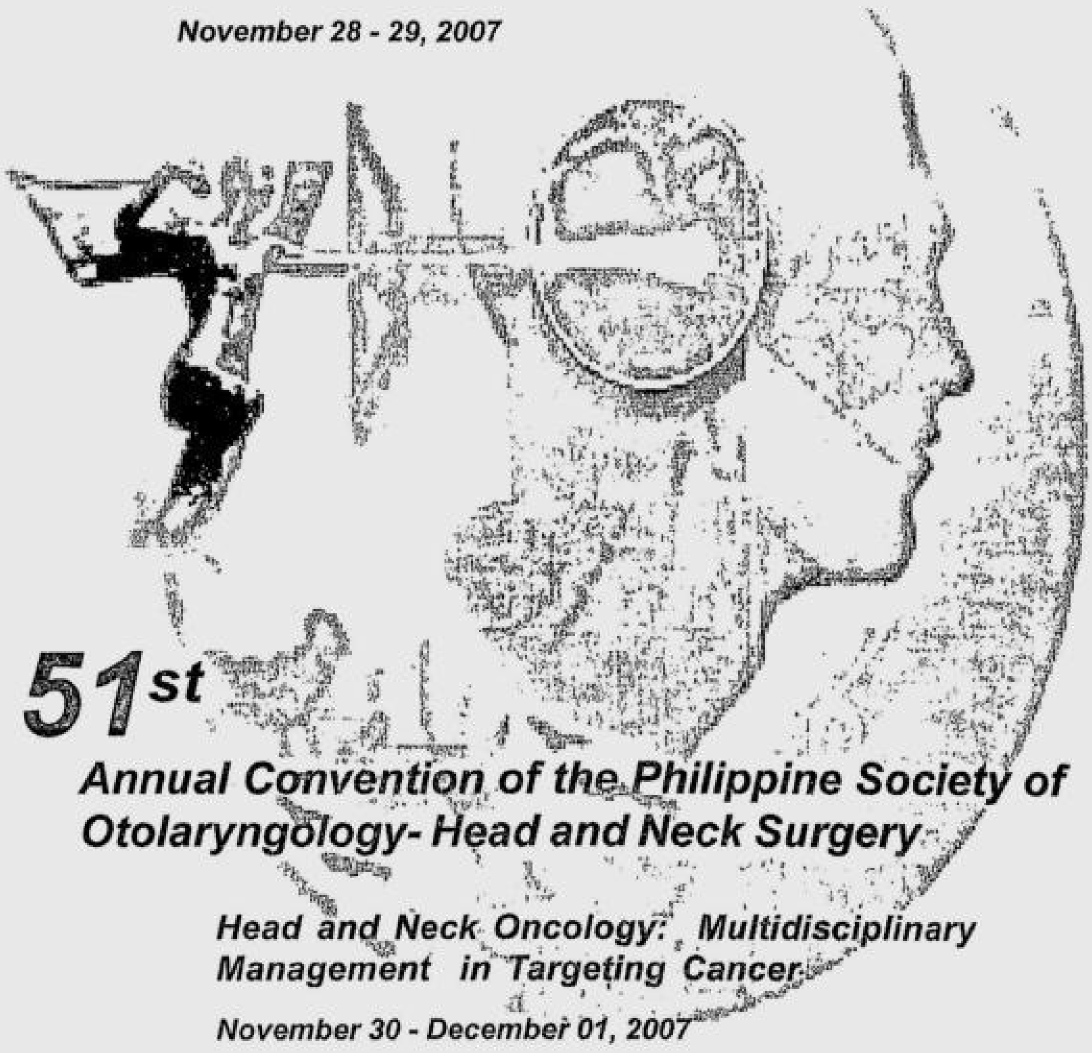
12th Asian Research Symposium in Rhinology

The Asian Nose: Are We Different?

November 28 - 29, 2007



51st

Annual Convention of the Philippine Society of Otolaryngology- Head and Neck Surgery

Head and Neck Oncology: Multidisciplinary Management in Targeting Cancer

November 30 - December 01, 2007

Convention Venue: Sofitel Philippine Plaza Hotel, Manila, Philippines

Message

My warm congratulations to the Philippine Society of Otolaryngology - Head and Neck Surgery (PSO-HNS), Inc. as it holds the 12th Asian Research Symposium in Rhinology (ARSR) and the 51st PSO-HNS Annual Convention on November 28 - December 01, 2007.

For 51 years, the PSO-HNS has advanced medical education, scientific research and practice management guidance for our Filipino Otolaryngologists nationwide. Because of these efforts, diseases of the ear, nose and throat (ENT), and structures of the head and neck are properly being managed and diagnosed through the conduct of contemporary, ethical and clinically relevant information in otolaryngology. Likewise, by keeping the general membership abreast with the latest developments in the specialty, patient care and public health are continually being improved

I have a high regard for your organization, which is already an acknowledged institution composed of renowned specialists in the field of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery. Your pursuit of excellence in your chosen profession is indeed worthy of emulation. As the Administration aspires for quality public health care, I exhort you to continue this endeavor by providing the most up-to-date education, training and research to keep at par with global developments.

May this event inspire your esteemed medical experts and professionals to continue to provide quality and efficient service to the public. My wishes for a very successful convention.

Mabuhay!

NOLI "KABAYAN" DE CASTRO

Message

We cordially invite you to meet up with colleagues and exchange-scientific ideas in this year's twin meeting of the 12th Asian Research Symposium in Rhinology (ARSR) and the 51st Annual Convention of the Philippine Society of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery (PSO-HNS).

With the 12th ARSR's theme of "The Asian Nose: Are We Different?", we hope to provide an appropriate venue for scientific dissertations on the anatomic, physiologic and disease entities inherent and unique in this part of the world.

On the other hand, for the PSO-HNS Annual Convention, we have lined up scientific sessions which will tackle recent advances in various medical, surgical and radiological disciplines in the treatment of head and neck cancer. The 2-day convention will also serve as an occasion for head and neck surgeons, medical oncologists, radiation oncologists and other specialists who deal with the holistic care of cancer patients to share with each other their wealth of experience.

We are leaving no stone unturned in ensuring a rewarding and memorable experience. We look forward to welcoming you to the Philippines in November 2007.

Eutrapio S. Guevara Jr., MD

President, PSO-HNS, Inc.

SCIENTIFIC PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

Head and Neck Surgery

Evolution of Head and Neck Cancer Management
Management of Neck Metastases: Thyroid and Salivary Neoplasm
State of the Art in Nasopharyngeal Cancer Surgery
Surgical Approaches on Parapharyngeal Tumors
Laryngotracheal Resection and Reconstruction
Laryngeal Transplantation
Minimal Access Thyroidectomy Endoscopic Resection
Phoniatric Aspects of Thyroid Surgery (The Larynx and Thyroid)
Extensive Head and Neck Cancer Surgery and Reconstructions: Is it worth it?
Da Vinci S Robotic Surgical System in Head and Neck
Transoral Laser: Microlaryngeal Endoscopic Approaches, T1 T2 T3 & T4
CyberKnife Stereotactic Radio Surgery System (G 4)
Quality of Life: Organ Preservation

Multi-Modality Treatment of Head and Neck Cancers

Oncogenes: Genetics in Developing New Treatment Modalities
Immunotherapy
Tomo-Therapy: Image Guided Radiotherapy (IGRT)
Targeted Therapy in Recurrent Head and Neck Cancer
(Targeting EGFR in Head and Neck Cancer)
Celocoxib (Celebrex) in Biomarker Modulation of Oral Precancerous Lesion
Lumiracoxib (Prexige) for Pain Manage in Head and Neck Cancer
Neoadjuvant Docetaxel and Paclitaxel
Amifostine and Chemoradiotherapy Effects
HPV and Head and Neck Cancer: Vaccines? Preventive Oncology
New Prospects in Chemo-RT in Head and Neck Cancer
Molecular and Nutrition Oncology: New Approaches in Cancer Nutrition

Pain Management

Imaging Techniques for Head and Neck Cancers

For Program Schedules: http://www.psohns.org.ph/ARSR

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Per DTI-NCR Permit #3886, Series of 2007

2 storms squeeze Luzon

From page A1

Lando's renewed onslaught, relief officials said.

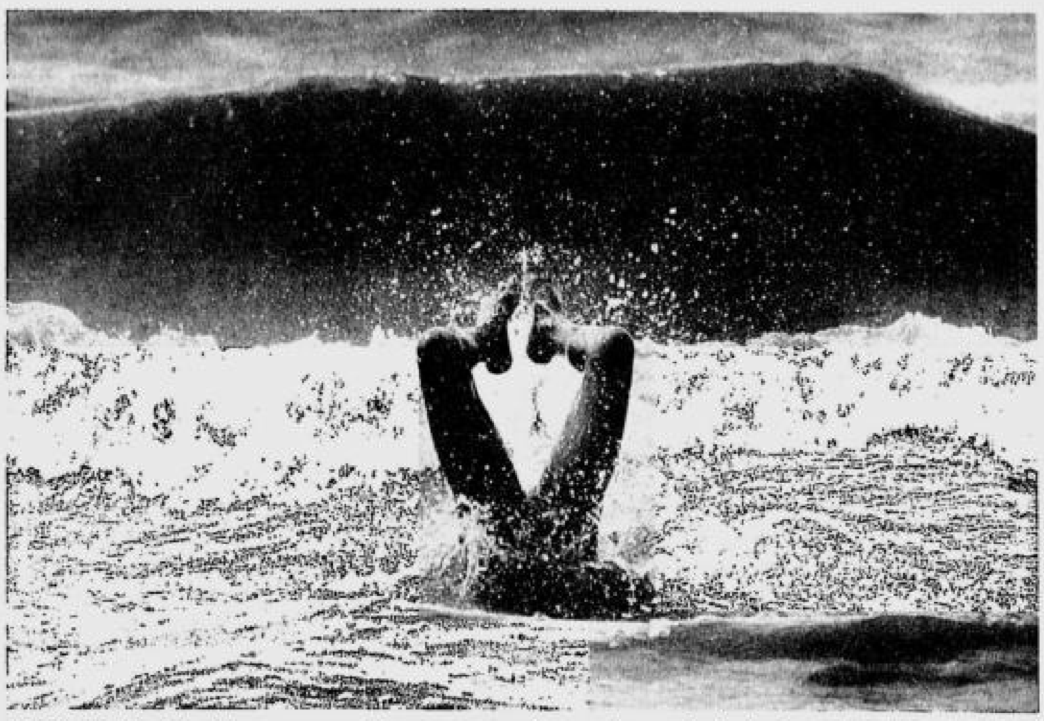
As if the two storms were not enough, another low pressure area has also formed east of the Philippines, with the prospective name of "Nonoy."

Mina triggered waist-deep floods in places, drowning two villagers in Cagayan and bringing to 10 the number of people it has killed since it began battering Bicol over the weekend.

Some 400,000 people had fled to evacuation centers to avoid Mina's powerful winds, the National Disaster Coordinating Council (NDCC) said.

Lando swirled back to the Philippines at about 9 a.m. yesterday after menacing Vietnam. It reentered the country the same way it left last Wednesday—through the western part.

Lando killed 14 people in the Visayas in its first rampage last week.



UNMINDFUL of the big waves caused by stormy weather, a swimmer frolics in the surf in Manila Bay on Monday.

EDWIN BACASMAS

Fujiwhara effect

"This is an offshoot of the Fujiwhara effect, where two weather systems with sufficient distance between them would interact," Pagasa weather branch chief Nathaniel Cruz told reporters.

"If Mina isn't around anymore, Lando would not come back."

This condition happens when two storms rotate on almost opposite positions at a single point. *(See illustration on front page.)*

After hitting Isabela, Mina's sustained winds weakened to 120 kilometers per hour, with gusts of up to 150 kph. It was forecast to bring stormy weather over Basco, Batanes, this morning, according to the weather bureau.

Pagasa raised storm signal No. 3 over the Batanes group of islands, Babuyan group of islands, Cagayan, Kalinga, Apayao and Ilocos Norte, where winds of 101 to 185 kph are expected.

Signal No. 2 was hoisted over Isabela, Ifugao, Mountain Province, Benguet, La Union and Ilocos Sur.

Troublesome Lando

Signal No. 1 was raised over Aurora, Quirino, Nueva Ecija, Nueva Vizcaya, Tarlac and Pangasinan.

Metro Manila will continue to experience cloudy weather with rainshowers, Cruz said.

Mina is moving north northeast at 11 kph and is expected by late Wednesday to storm out of the country toward Okinawa, Japan.

Pesky Lando is packing maximum winds of 95 kph and is expected to hit Palawan tonight, bringing stormy weather also over Mindoro, according to Cruz.

The bureau raised storm signal No. 2 over northern Palawan, including the Calamian group of islands, and signal No. 1 over the rest of Palawan, including Cuyo island, Oriental Mindoro and Occidental Mindoro, including Lubang island.

It is rare for a storm like Lando to swing back to the country, Cruz said.

It would be even more rare if the low pressure area spotted east of the country yesterday should also enter the Philippine area and join Mina and Lando at the same time, Cruz said.

"There is a low pressure area that has the potential to strengthen. If it enters the country, it will be named Nonoy. It's possible we will have three storms in the Philippine area of responsibility," he said.

Deadly succession

Forecasters recalled that another storm a few years ago had also made a turnaround and hit the country after making an initial exit.

It is not strange for the Philippines to suffer storms in deadly succession.

In November 2004, after Typhoon "Unding" battered the country, Tropical Depression "Violeta" passed over. Five days later, Typhoon "Winnie" struck, followed by still another typhoon.

The return of Lando sent 6,000 people flooding back to evacuation centers from lahar- and flood-prone areas in Bicol.

As of 6 p.m, the NDCC said a total of 88,317 families, or 399,033 persons, had been evacuated in 11 provinces in regions 2, 3, 4a and 5 affected by Mina.

A substantial number of the evacuees have gone back home, mostly in Bicol.

Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro said the government's preparedness lessened the damage brought by Mina and Lando. But he stressed the need for vigilance while the two storms had not yet exited the country.

At least two people drowned when water levels rose in rivers in Apayao and Cagayan on Sunday and Monday due to strong rains spawned by Mina, reports gathered by the INQUIRER showed.

A landslide damaged a section of the Patapat Bridge in Pagudpud, Ilocos Norte, making it impassable to all types of vehicles, the provincial disaster coordinating council (PDCC) said.

Floods also hit low-lying villages in Apayao, Isabela, Cagayan, Pangasinan and Aurora.

The Office of Civil Defense in the Cordillera said Santos Sabedra, 78, drowned in Conner town when his house near the swollen Apayao River was washed away by a strong current.

Two other Conner residents—Reiner Abawag, 2, and Felipe Abawag, 65—were missing after their house was also swept away.

In Cagayan, Junjun Rebilledo, 20, drowned while he was crossing the Pared River, police said.

Landslides, power outages

Power outages occurred in Cagayan and Isabela. In Apayao, a landslide isolated the capital town of Kabugao.

Flooding swamped several villages in Conner, Flora, Sta. Marcela, Luna and Pudtol towns, also in Apayao.

Landslides and rising water levels forced the evacuation of 1,443 families in Apayao and nearby Kalinga, OCD said.

Rains have not yet breached the critical dam levels of Binga and Ambuklao Dams in Benguet, and the San Roque Dam in Pangasinan.

Authorities opened a gate each in Binga and Ambuklao as a precaution to prevent an uncontrolled overflow from the dams.

In Isabela, floodwaters submerged at least 55 villages in Ilagan and Tumauini. More than 100 families in the coastal town of Dinapigue were evacuated.

Power supply in several towns in Isabela was cut off on Sunday night but was restored on Monday morning.

Several villages in 14 towns in Cagayan were flooded, and Gov. Alvaro Antonio suspended classes and work in government offices.

Horses in raincoats

Strong winds toppled trees and knocked down power poles, cutting off electricity in Cagayan.

"We were just one or two weeks away from harvest time. I'm afraid we've lost everything to the flood and strong winds," Antonio said.

In Baguio City, the threat of three converging storms spoiled the outdoor launching of the city's Yuletide activities on Monday.

Undaunted, local officials and hotel executives came out in suits and gathered at the City Hall to open Christmas activities and announce preparations for the 2008 Baguio Flower Festival (Panagbenga).

At Wright Park, horses rented out to tourists were forced to wear makeshift raincoats to protect them from the rains.

Kennon Road was closed to traffic, although no landslide was reported.

In Aurora province, 428 families remained in evacuation centers. Evacuees from 15 villages in San Luis, Dingalan, Dilasag, Dipaculao, Casiguran and Dinalungan towns sought shelter in barangay and municipal halls, schools, and farmers training centers.

In Pangasinan, the water level at the San Roque Dam in San Manuel town reached 278.8 meters, less than two meters below its spilling level of 280 meters.

Water from the dam

The PDCC asked residents in Calasiao, Sta. Barbara and Alcala towns to be on the alert in case water is released from the dam.

"In Cagayan, our main problem was the flashfloods," said Dr. Anthony Golez, NDCC spokesperson.

Golez said the Philippine Army's 5th Infantry Battalion responded to rescue calls in Piat, Rizal, and Tuao in Cagayan because of the flashfloods.

Golez said 6,000 people who were evacuated after Mina threatened to hit the eastern seaboard region were sent home after the typhoon changed its path.

But they were brought back to evacuation centers in the face of threat from Lando.

The official NDCC death toll from Mina stood at eight.

For the fourth consecutive day, airliners canceled domestic flights to typhoon-threatened areas.

These included an Asian Spirit flight to San Fernando City, La Union, a Cebu Pacific 11:50 a.m. flight to Laoag, an Air Philippines flight to Tuguegarao and a Philippine Airlines flight to Laoag.

International flights were unhampered. *Reports from Cristina Arzadon, Villamor Visaya Jr., Estanislao Caldez, Vincent Cabreza, Yolanda Sotelo-Fuertes, Gabriel Cardinoza, Anselmo Roque and Tonette Orejas, Inquirer Northern Luzon; Tarra Quismundo in Manila; and AP*

PETPlans Conversion Plan enters final phase

P2.9 B in trust fund shares ready for distribution

Successful implementation of PETPlans' Conversion Plan has reached its final phase as planholders all over the country begin to receive starting this week their Statement of Account (SoA) which confirms their ownership of shares in a unified trust fund. Dubbed as the Enhanced Value Plan, or EVP, this replaces the planholders' education, pension and life plans under the former pre-need contracts.

The previous plans used to have three separate trust funds. These were consolidated under a unified trust fund, whose combined liquidity is expected to provide better returns for the benefit of the planholders.

The SoAs shall be sent directly by courier or registered mail to the planholders' given address.

PETPlans' conversion plan, as approved by the Makati Regional Trial Court, authorized the transfer of all its trust assets to a professional group of fund managers.

For this role, the Asset Management Group of the Bank of the Philippine Islands was selectedto independently manage the unified trust fund.

Considered a unique victory for PETPlans policy holders, the conversion plan provides planholders with either immediate liquidity or sustained returns on their investments within a more stable framework.

PETPlans' combined trust fund amounting to P2.915 billion as of end-August this year has remained intact and secure with BPI.

The EVP offers the following advantages: a) it never lapses; b) it can be withdrawn at anytime; and c) it has a variable return which could yield higher earnings.

Additional investments made will be contributed in full or 100% to the fund, net of minimal handling fees; unlike in the old plans where only 60% on average went to the fund.

Also, PETPlans will continue to operate as a company even after the conversion plan has been completed and will contribute 15% of its annual income for the next 10 years to the planholders' trust fund, as required under the conversion plan.

Frequently Asked Questions

What You Need to Know about the EVP

1.What is the EVP?

The EVP is a share in the unified education, pension and life trust funds which have been transferred to the Bank of the Philippine Islands for its safekeeping and the management of its Asset Management Group.

2.What happens to the benefits and privileges under the pre-need contracts?

With the court's approval of the Conversion Plan, the original pre-need contracts have been nullified and converted into the EVP, and the previous benefits are now to be replaced by the benefits under the EVP.

3.What is the basis for the value of my EVP?

A set percentage of your instalments go into the trust fund, from 5% for first year payments to 90% for last year payments, or an average of 55% to 61% of total installment. The rest of your instalments that did not go into the trust fund went to your insurance coverage, operating expenses, commissions for the agents, taxes and licenses.

With the conversion, the trust fund was divided equitably amongst all in-force plans.

For plans in the paying period, the basis for conversion was the termination value, which approximates the trust fund contribution to the plan.

For fully paid plans, the basis for conversion is the amount of trust fund contributions made and the timing thereof. So, plans with larger contributions will receive a larger value. Also contributions made earlier will have generated income for a longer period and will also receive a larger value.

4.What can I expect from my EVP?

Your EVP will be managed by the BPI Asset Management Group to provide sustained, reasonable returns.

Your EVP also has liquidity feature such that approximately 70% to 100% of the value may be encashed outright.

Your EVP may approximate the future benefits due in your original pre-need plan if held for the same number of years.

While it is no longer a pre-need plan, PETPlans will facilitate memorial benefits servicing against your EVP if you require.

5.Are near maturing and availing plans included in the conversion plan?

Yes, plans maturing within the next three years or currently availing are included. Computation of their NPV will be the same as the NPV computation for fully paid plans. The NPV of availing plans will be net of all benefits already given to them.

6.Are lapsed plans included?

Only those that lapsed after June 2006 or after the filing of the petition for conversion in court will be included. They will be considered active as of first unpaid due date and the computation will be similar to that for partially paid plans. Plans that lapsed before June 2006 and were not reinstated have been forfeited and will not participate in the conversion.

A Victory for Planholders

Dear Valued Planholders:

In the next few weeks, you will receive Statements of Accont (SoA) confirming that you have acquired your respective shares in a unified trust fund amounting to nearly P3 Billion which will now be managed by one of the country's largest and most experienced banks.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and the Management of PETPlans, allow me to thank all of you for bearing with us during the much-extended time within which we had to go through the numerous legal and technical processes necessary. This included the task of unifying all trust fund assets into a single account and reconfiguring the software to manage the records of about 125,000 planholders, many of whom had several types of plans.

We all had to be very patient and extra careful in trying to eliminate or minimize any problems related to the Conversion Plan, including the transfer in your name of the trust assets under the pre-need setup to a unified trust fund that we believe should give you reasonable returns on your investments.

This Conversion Plan is a significant victory for all PETPlans planholders, as it successfully prevented any huge losses or continuous deterioration of the value of your trust funds under the pre-need contracts. In the midst of all the troubles that affected the pre-need industry, we found a solution whose validity and timeliness was recognized by the court.

I ask you to please read carefully the information that will accompany your SoAs as these materials will familiarize you with the terms and conditions of the Enhanced Value Plan, and what you may reasonably expect from it. You will not have to submit any document when you get your SoAs but you will have to sign for it to acknowledge that you received it. We are delivering to a very large area in the cities and provinces, so it might take a few days or even weeks before the SoAs get to your last given and validated address.

Rest assured that we will continue to serve you in the best way we can so that we may deserve your continuing trust in PETPlans.

(Sgd.) ***LORENZO T. OCAMPO***
President and CEO

PETPLANS

(Advt)

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Tuesday, November 27, 2007
34th Week in Ordinary Time

1st Reading: **Dn 2:31-45**
Gospel: **Luke 21:5-11**

While some people were talking about the Temple, remarking that it was adorned with fine stonework and rich gifts, Jesus said to them, "The days will come when there shall not be left one stone upon another of all that you now admire; all will be torn down." And they asked him, "Master, when will this be, and what will be the sign that this is about to take place?"

Jesus then said, "Take care not to be deceived, for many will come claiming my title and saying: 'I am he, the Messiah; the time is at hand.' Do not follow them. When you hear of wars and troubled times, don't be frightened; for all this must happen first, even though the end is not so soon."

And Jesus said, "Nations will fight each other and kingdom will oppose kingdom. There will be great earthquakes, famines and plagues; in many places strange and terrifying signs from heaven will be seen."

Commentary

Daniel reports on the king's dream and is truthful in telling the king that another will replace him, and that the kingdom will be divided into alliances made by marriage, and that all will shatter and fall. But there will be a kingdom without end, set up by God. It will be stronger than all kingdoms on earth. Daniel the slave becomes Daniel the prophet of God, speaking the truth to the mightiest power in his lifetime/history.

And Jesus too speaks as a prophet while he watches his disciples contemplate and admire the buildings of the temple (the restoration that has just recently been completed). But, as with all buildings, all kingdoms, all institutions, dynasties, and leaders, it will one day be utterly destroyed and gone. And they want to know when. But Jesus wants them to be truly religious, to trust in the face of history, and not be bound to their externals, but instead be internally bound to the community and to obedience. Our history is being described—this is not only about Jerusalem and the temple, but also about the United States, Europe, Asia, every country and ruler, even the Vatican and all its buildings. Do we live with the heart of our religion and not its superficialities?

Oil price hike protests held

By Tina G. Santos and Jolene R. Bulambot
Inquirer Visayas

SOME 500 MEMBERS OF A MAJOR transport group yesterday staged a march to protest the rising oil prices but were stopped by riot police from proceeding to Mendiola bridge in front of Malacañang.

The protesters, members of Pinagkaisang Samahan ng Tsuper at Operator Nationwide (Piston), staged an hour-long rally on Morayta Street instead—causing a huge traffic jam in the university belt—to press their demand for the suspension of the Oil Deregulation Law and the removal of the value-added tax (VAT) on oil products.

The Manila jeepney drivers rally is part of a nationwide series of protest actions preparatory to the holding of a general strike in December, said George San Mateo, secretary general of Piston.

San Mateo said "selective" transport strikes were also held in Batangas and Laguna yesterday.

In Metro Cebu, jeepney drivers allied with the Nagkahiusang Drivers sa Sugbo (Nadsu) staged a protest caravan from Mandaue City to Plaza Independencia in Cebu City demanding government approval of a fare hike.

Ruben Rama, secretary general of the group, said their 5,000-strong group would join Piston's planned nationwide transport strike next month if the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board does not grant their petition to hike the minimum fare from P6 to P7.50.

He said the LTFRB did not approve the fare hike in Cebu despite higher gasoline prices, after a consumer group there filed a petition asking for its postponement.

Another transport group, Ang Nagkahiusang Drayber alang sa Reporma (Andar), said it would ask for P2 fare adjustment.

Andar vice chair Romeo Armamento said the drivers could no longer bear the increase in the prices of lubricants, batteries, tires and spare parts.

At the same time, Benjamin Yu, managing director of Cebu Integrated Transport Services Cooperative (Citrasco), said some 2,000 taxi drivers in Cebu also intend to file a petition seeking an increase in the flag-down rate from P30 to P35 and in the succeeding kilometer rate from P2.50 to P3.

LTFRB acting regional director Reynaldo Elnas urged the drivers' associations to file their petitions as soon as possible so the agency can take action.

PAF plane missing

ONE OF TWO MILITARY jets on a search mission near the Kalayaan island group in the South China Sea yesterday is feared to have crashed near the Kalayaan island chain, the Philippine Air Force said yesterday.

The S-211, an Italian-made trainer plane acquired by the PAF in the early '90s, went missing off Pag-Asa Island while flying in tandem with a similar aircraft both out of Antonio Bautista Air Base in Puerto Princesa City.

Fishing vessel

The planes were searching for a Filipino fishing vessel, the FB Vir Anna 101, with 26 crew members which sank off Pag-Asa last week due to the strong winds brought by Typhoon "Lando."

Only the lead plane returned to base at 11:30 a.m. It last made contact with the missing plane an hour before that.

"The clouds were not thick but they spanned a wide area. The two aircraft entered the clouds as 6,000 feet. The lead plane talked to the wingman to ask if they could see him. The lead pilot decided to go up to 8,000 feet," PAF chief Lt. Gen. Horacio Tolentino said.

No answer

"At that point, when the lead plane tried to contact the wingman, there was no answer," he said at a press conference yesterday afternoon.

Tolentino said the incident had nothing to do with the typhoons that hit the country as the weather was good where they were at the time.

In the missing two-seater aircraft were pilot Capt. Gavino Mercado Jr. and copilot Capt. Bonifacio Soriano III.

On the request of the PAF, a US military P-3 Orion, a maritime patrol aircraft, was dispatched from Clark Air Base in Pampanga to scour an area spanning an 80-km radius from where the S-211 had last made contact. A Philippine Navy ship was also called to help look for the plane. *Tarra Quismundo, with Geraldford Ticke, Contributor*

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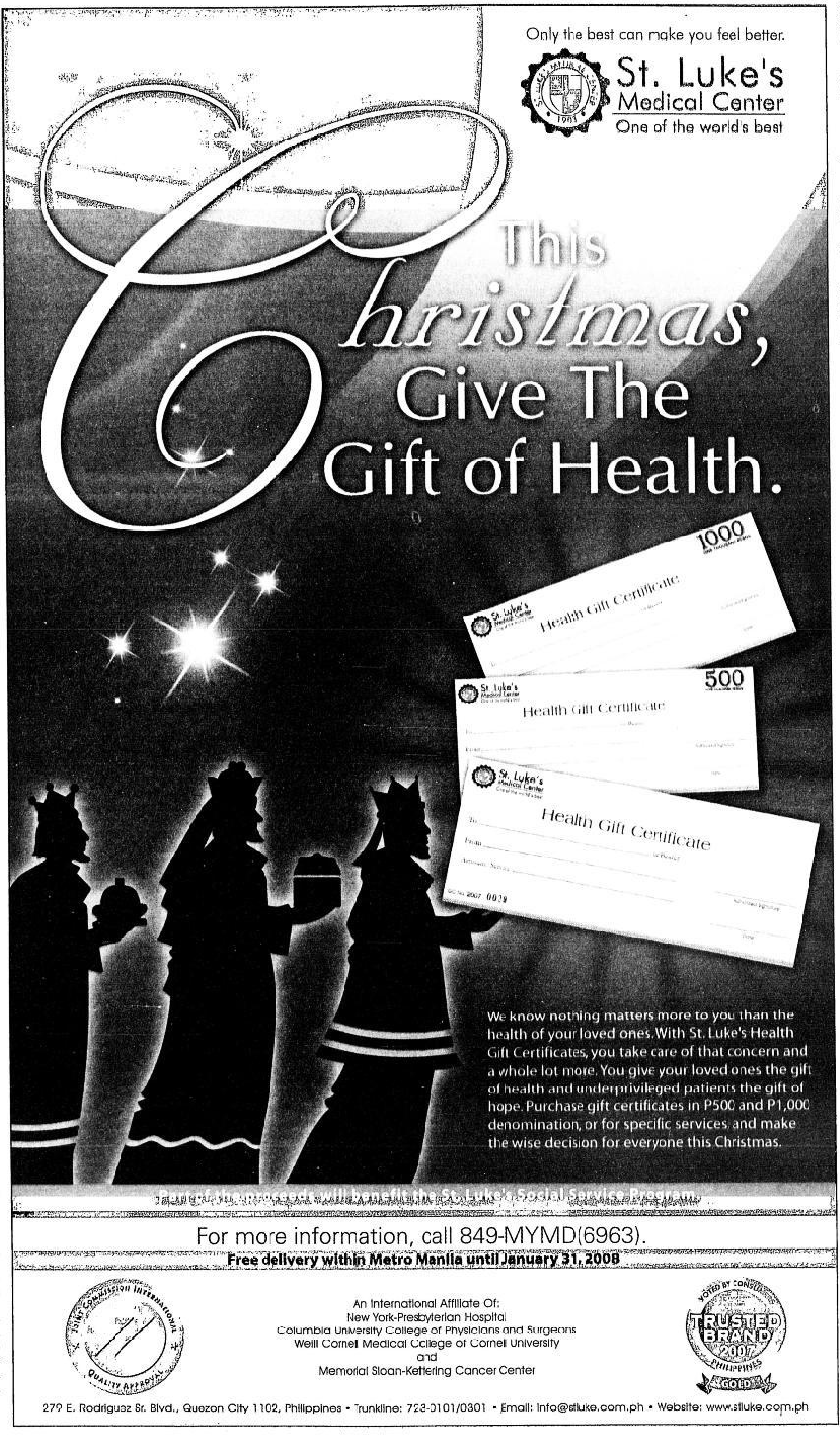

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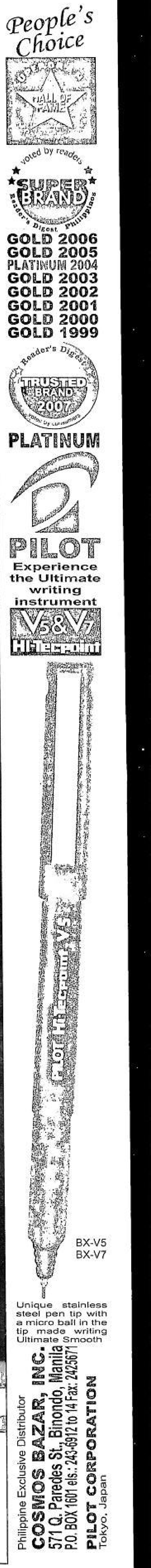

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Teachers subsidizing pupils' needs

From page A1

across-the-board increase in pay for government workers. Mandatory deductions for income tax and for GSIS, Pag-Ibig and PhilHealth premiums result in a net take-home pay of around P8,200 per month—well below a reasonable wage by any standard.

In private schools, the situation is mixed.

Elite schools (such as Ateneo and La Salle) can afford starting salaries of P15,000 or higher—50 percent more than the starting pay of a public school teacher.

The situation for teachers in nonelite private schools is the reverse. In SY (school year) 2003-04 when the public school salary for Teacher I was already pegged at P9,980 per month, the Catholic Education Association of the Philippines reported an average starting monthly salary of P5,405 (secondary) to P5,968 (elementary) for teachers among its member schools.

Assuming a 10-percent increase every year for the past four years, the recomputed average in 2007 would be P7,900 for high school teachers and P8,700 for those in elementary school. The salary levels are still 30 percent less than the DepEd's starting pay for teachers today. With mandatory deductions, net take-home pay for teachers in nonelite private schools would be even lower at P6,000 to P6,500.

How teachers survive

How do teachers survive with such low pay? Through salary loans and private borrowing.

In 2003, the Department of Education (DepED) took a serious look at salary loans from private lending institutions (PLIs) which utilized the automatic payroll deduction scheme.

Analysis of payroll slips revealed that over 450,000 teachers and nonteaching personnel under the DepED had an estimated P14 billion in outstanding salary loans from around 195 PLIs. This meant an average loan of slightly over P30,000 per teacher over a 12-month period at an average interest rate of 75.5 percent per annum (or over 6 percent per month).

On top of this burden, public school teachers have an estimated P15 billion more in salary loans from GSIS, the state pension fund, which was also repaid through automatic payroll deduction.

Furthermore, housing loans from GSIS and Pag-Ibig added another P25 billion in personal debt to be amortized over longer periods of time.

All told, less than half a million public school teachers and nonteaching personnel had a total personal debt of over P54 billion in 2003.

Older married teachers borrowed up to three times a year to fund school fees of their children (especially college); younger teachers borrowed irregularly for appliances and events. A good number also borrowed to help out extended families.

'London' environment

Borrowing to make ends meet has been so prevalent among teachers that it has become a part of the culture. The vast majority are "over-borrowed" with the common remark that they live in a "London" environment ("loan dito, loan doon").

The General Appropriations Act now establishes a minimum take-home pay for teachers of P3,000 per month. If this were not enacted, a significant percentage of teachers would have no monthly take-home pay.

In 2003, the DepED also directed that no PLIs could use the automatic payroll deduction scheme if they charged more than 18-percent interest and more than 6 percent of the principal in processing fees.

The current policy has resulted in an average real effective interest rate of 24 percent (versus the 75.5 percent before). Fly-by-night lenders were taken out of the system, and payroll slips were redesigned so that PLIs would know if a teacher had over-borrowed.

THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL on June 4, 2007, saw some students sitting on the floor at the Batasan High School in Quezon City due to the shortage of desks. JOAN BONDOC

Still, many teachers find ways to borrow even more to stay ahead. Unfortunately, they end up resorting to the more ruinous "5-6" type of lending.

Pay below other professionals

In public schools, a meager government budget (despite the large share for the DepEd) keeps teacher salaries well below those of other professionals.

In nonelite private schools, teachers have even lower salaries. What parents cannot afford are absorbed by teachers as a de facto cut in pay.

Compare this to what new graduates make as call center agents and you get the idea.

We cannot hope to invite the best and the brightest to the teaching profession unless teacher pay is improved.

Starting school too late

Another disconnect in the education system is that the majority of children start school late.

In 1995, policymakers set the entry age for Grade 1 at 6 years old, consistent with worldwide experience.

A decade later, however, only a little more than a third (38 percent) of all Grade 1 pupils are actually 6 years old—the "right" age. More than a third (39 percent) start school at 7 years. The rest—almost one quarter (23 percent)—begin at 8 years or older.

Does the starting age matter? It does.

In 2005, the DepEd prepared a 10-year budget simulation study to determine how much we should invest annually in education in the national budget through 2015.

Disturbing trend

At the elementary level, a disturbing trend was revealed. Since the start of SY 2000-01, enrollment had grown by only an average of 0.5 percent a year.

With population growing at slightly more than 2 percent, did this mean that parents have not been enrolling their children at all? Or was the dropout rate so high as to lead to such low enrollment growth over the six-year elementary cycle?

Further analysis showed that the number of Grade 1 pupils in a given year matched the number of 6-year-olds that the National Statistics Office estimated nationwide for that year.

Hence, it appeared that almost 100 percent of all 6-year-olds were in fact being enrolled. What subsequent analysis revealed, however, was that only a little more than a third of all 6-year-olds were entering Grade 1 at the right age. The rest were actually older by one year or overage by two or more years.

'Right age' kids

In analyzing the data further, it appeared that in Grades 1-3, it was the "right-age" kids who were dropping out most. By impression, this was attributed to the poor health and nutrition of these young children.

Throughout the country, National Nutrition Council data revealed that 30 percent of all children aged 6-12 years were found to be underweight and/or under height. This level of stunting is a reflection of undernutrition, if not malnutrition.

From Grades 5 through the end of fourth year in high school (HS IV), the reverse began to happen. At the higher grade levels, it was the overage kids who were now dropping out in larger numbers.

Thus, once the "right age" kids got to Grade 4, their chances of finishing the entire basic education cycle increased dramatically. The large number of dropouts from Grades 5 through HS IV were now overage kids leaving for a variety of reasons, including peer pressure (from *hiya*), poor achievement, or the lure of work.

Because parents were aware of their children's poor health status, they were in fact postponing the entry of their children in Grade 1 assuming that an older child may be better able to withstand the rigor of daily schooling than a younger child.

What parents don't realize is that "overage" children at the high school level begin to feel old when compared to their younger classmates, and this feeling contributes to a sense of inadequacy (i.e. feeling *bobo*) and a subsequent lack of interest in finishing schooling, especially among boys.

Dropout profile

DepEd data reveals the following dropout profile: For every 100 children who enter Grade 1, 15 drop out before reaching Grade 2; another 9 will leave school before Grade 4; by the end of Grade 6, 35 of the original 100 have stopped schooling; after finishing Grade 6, 8 of these graduates will not make the transition to high school; at the end of HS IV, only 42 will graduate.

The dropout rate in the first four years of elementary is thus a combined 24 percent versus 34 percent from Grade 5 through HS IV. In the earlier years, it is the "right age" kids who constitute the larger share of dropouts. In the latter years, however, it is the overage kids that account for most of the dropouts.

The key then is to get kids to school at age 6 (i.e. the "right age") and find ways to get them through Grade 4. Once they have reached this milestone, the probability that they will complete the entire basic education cycle increases dramatically. It is the "right age" kids who have a better chance than overage kids in finishing basic education and graduating from high school.

How to keep underweight, under-height, undernourished kids in school thus becomes a critical concern.

The key is in-school feeding—not rice distribution. This would lessen the dropout rate in Grades 1-3 by increasing the students' body mass and improving their stamina for daily schooling.

Parent education and participation are critical. If parents do not understand and appreciate that the right age for schooling has a logic to it, they unwittingly increase the likelihood of dropouts at the high school level—and the very real prospect of consigning their kids to a life of uncertainty and poor quality.

Roxas takes over LP helm, signals 2010 Palace run

From page A1

hanging at the historic Kalayaan Hall of Club Filipino in Greenhills, San Juan, proclaimed "*Oras na* (It's time)," which rhymes with "Roxas *na* (Go for Roxas)."

Roxas, who will officially become LP president on Nov. 30, used the phrase "*Oras na*" nine times in his acceptance speech. The speech was itself titled "*Oras na!*"

The emcee, ex-Rep. Nereus Acosta Jr., and Sen. Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III, who formally nominated Roxas, also used the phrase several times before the meeting of the LP National Executive Council (Neco) that was witnessed by about 1,000 members and supporters, including prominent politicians who are not with LP.

But trouble could be brewing elsewhere.

Environment Secretary Lito Atienza scoffed at Roxas' election as LP president and warned it would further divide the party.

"I'm saddened by what happened ... In effect, the division that exists in the party continues," Atienza told reporters. "Instead of unifying the party, our division is further exposed when they forced the election without us."

Atienza's option

Atienza, former LP chair, claimed the rival LP faction had purged members loyal to him from the voting members list of the National Executive Council.

"In this supposed election, they decided to go on their own and elect Mar Roxas as their president, depriving members of Neco from participating," he said.

"In effect, we can say now, congratulations to Mar Roxas, you're now the president of the Liberal Party-Drilon faction. But definitely, not a united Liberal Party," he said.

Atienza said his group would question the matter in the Commission on Elections or the courts.

The LP gathering at Club Filipino elected Roxas party president to a three-year term until November 2010. He was also given blanket authority to appoint other officers of the party.

"We shall build a strong, united and modern LP, rooted in its founding principles ... and lead it to victory in 2010," Roxas declared in his only reference to the presidential fight.

'Ready for 2010'

Keeping his emotions in check, Roxas assumed the presidency of the party that was founded by his grandfather and namesake, Manuel Roxas, in 1946.

His father, the late Sen. Gerardo "Gerry" Roxas, headed it in 1968.

The LP has produced three presidents—Manuel Roxas, Elpidio Quirino and Diosdado Macapagal, father of President Macapagal-Arroyo.

While Roxas demurred about his 2010 candidacy, other LP officials were forthright.

"We are ready for 2010 and we don't see anyone else as our standard-bearer except Mar (Roxas)," said outgoing LP president, ex-Senate President Franklin Drilon.

Also on hand were past LP presidents Jovito Salonga, Wigberto Tañada, Florencio "Butch" Abad and Raul Daza and other Neco officials. Salonga administered the oath to Roxas.

Fellow Senators Rodolfo Biazon and Francis Pangilinan showed up with several congressmen, ex-congressmen, governors, mayors and other local officials.

Isabela Gov. Grace Padaca also formally nominated Roxas.

'Formidable party'

Former President Corazon Aquino, Cecille Mitra, the widow of the late Speaker Ramon Mitra, and Roxas' mother, Judy Araneta-Roxas, were also around.

Drilon told reporters that Roxas' assumption of the party leadership was in preparation for his presidential bid.

"I am optimistic that under the stewardship of Sen. Mar Roxas, the Liberal Party will be the only formidable party to reckon with in 2010," he said.

Drilon and Roxas paid tribute to past LP members who had suffered political persecution—the assassinated Sen. Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr., Antique Gov. Evelio Javier, Zamboanga City Mayor Cesar Climaco, Salonga and Gerry Roxas.

"You cannot be part of the beloved Liberal Party of Ninoy, Ka Jovy, Ka Bobby Tañada, Ka Raul (Daza) and not form an opinion about the killings of journalists and activists and widespread graft and corruption aided and abetted by the abuse and misuse of executive privilege," said Roxas.

Roxas would take over a party that was split in July 2005 over loyalty to President Macapagal-Arroyo following the outbreak of the "Hello Garci" election cheating scandal.

The Supreme Court in June upheld the presidency of Drilon against the claim of Atienza, erstwhile LP chair.

The Atienza-led faction did not send a representative yesterday.

Healing the split

But several politicians who are not LP members were around, such as Cebu Gov. Gwen Garcia, Cebu City Mayor Tomas Osmeña, Mandaluyong Rep. Neptali Gonzales Jr., Mayor Alfred Romualdez, Rep. Martin Romualdez, Bayan Muna party-list Rep. Satur Ocampo, ex-Akbayan party-list Rep. Etta Rosales and Akbayan chair Ronaldo Llamas.

In a press conference, Roxas said his group was open to forging unity with other groups "but not at the expense of the (party's) independence."

Reacting to reports that the Atienza faction would want prominent positions in the party hierarchy, he replied: "My leadership is not subject to hostage-taking. We will do what is best for our party, we will do what is best for our country and we will do what is right."

"We are always open to talking to everyone, especially those who have been and continue to be members of the Liberal Party but who may have a different opinion, a different view of current events and issues," Roxas added.

Elephants vs ants

Other potential 2010 contenders—Senate President Manuel Villar, Sen. Panfilo Lacson and Sen. Loren Legarda—congratulated Roxas but said 2010 was still far.

Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, who twice ran for president, described the 2010 presidential fight as one between "elephants" and "ants."

She said if ex-President Joseph Estrada decided to try again for the presidency, it would be a three-way battle among "multibillionaires," referring to Villar, Roxas and Estrada.

"It will be three multibillionaires fighting each other and all the rest will have the capacity of ants in the presence of three elephants," Santiago said.

Still too early

When reminded about the other contenders, such as Vice President Noli de Castro, Lacson and Legarda, Santiago replied, laughing: "They are ants. When the elephants sneeze, the ants will catch pneumonia."

Santiago said it was a political reality that one could not run for president with less than P1 billion in campaign funds.

"Anything we do two years before the elections is meaningless. *Maaga pa* (It's too early)," said Villar, who is also reviving the Nacionalista Party.

Legarda, who has joined the Nationalist People's Coalition, said her personal machinery had proven effective to get her elected last May.

Lacson, who ran for president in 2004, said the opposition should have learned its lesson and not field too many presidential candidates. He said two opposition candidates would do.

Quezon Rep. Lorenzo Tañada said it was "just a matter of time" before lawmakers who were former LP members rejoined the party to support Roxas' presidential bid.

He said former LP members about to rejoin the party included Deputy Speaker Eric Singson, House committee on justice chair Matias Defensor, and Representatives Junie Cua, Antonio Diaz, Reynaldo Uy, Danilo Suarez, Roman Romulo, Abraham Mitra, Florencio Miraflores, Solomon Chungaloao, Francisco Matugas and JC Rahman Nava.

Abad confirmed there were unity talks between the LP and former members associated with Atienza.

"But so far, nothing is conclusive," Abad said. *With a report from Norman Bordadora*

Israeli flag world's largest: Filipinos made it

From page A1

southeastern Israel, is where the Jews held out for three years against the Romans before committing mass suicide in 74 AD in the face of imminent defeat.

The huge blue and white Israeli flag, 660 meters long and 100 meters wide and weighing 5.2 metric tons, breaks the record for the world's largest, according to Israel's Ministry of Tourism.

The flag was measured by representatives of the Guinness Book of Records.

Gupana said she decided two years ago to produce a giant Israeli flag as a testament to her love for Israel and the Jewish people, and as a celebration of 50 years of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and Israel.

"God spoke to me in thunder and lightning," Gupana said. "The Lord said, 'Make the flag of Israel, the standard of my people.'"

"This is a tall order," she said, as she broke down in tears.

The record-breaking Israeli flag was accompanied by a giant Philippine flag—huge, but not quite as big. It weighed "only" about 3.8 metric tons.

Large stones anchored both flags as they billowed in the desert winds.

The flags made in the Philippines and shipped to Israel days ago, said Daniel Rozen, spokesperson for Living Stone Ministries, a group that helped bring the flags to Israel.

There are about 31,000 Filipinos in Israel, most of whom are foreign workers, said Gilberto Asuque, consul general of the Philippine Embassy in Israel.

"This flag expresses the friendship between the Philippines and the state of Israel, and also the friendship between Jewish and Christian communities," Shaul Zemach, director of the Israeli Ministry of Tourism.

In September last year, Gupana unfurled a giant Philippine flag in Aritao, Nueva Vizcaya, in an attempt to clinch the record for the world's biggest flag.

Hundreds of residents and volunteers unveiled the Philippine tri-color that measured 200 meters by 100 meters and weighed 3.75 tons.

The historic event, however, was marred when the flag, made of 100 percent Taffeta nylon, suffered a large tear on its white triangle about halfway while it was being unfurled down to its base.

Gupana earlier planned to unfold the same giant flag at the Sunken Garden at the University of the Philippines in Diliman. But her request to do so was denied both by the National Historical Institute and the university.

The NHI, citing Republic Act No. 8491, said "Gupana will not be able to comply with government flag specifications [regarding] design, size nor for lawful display." AP

Corrections

IN THE NOV. 24 ISSUE, a Saturday Special article on Page H4—"Lorna Tolentino marks 38th year in show biz with OFW film"—misstated that Joel Lamangan directed actress Lorna Tolentino in the film "Mano Po 2." The film was directed by Erik Matti.

* * *

IN THE FIRST EDITION of the Nov. 26 issue, the banner story—"GMA ally bidding for Transco scored"—misstated the name of President Macapagal-Arroyo's husband. The First Gentleman's name is Jose Miguel—not Juan Miguel—Arroyo.

* * *

THE SAME STORY misstated that Andres Soriano Jr. was the patriarch of the San Miguel conglomerate. The San Miguel patriarch was Andres Soriano Sr.

* * *

IN THE SAME ISSUE, a front-page article—"3rd Bush ally falls from power"—misstated the age of outgoing Australian Prime Minister John Howard. He is 68—not 60—years old.

* * *

IN THE SAME ISSUE, another front-page article—"No room for mistake in bomb experts' world"—misstated the first name of the deputy chief of the Philippine Bomb Data Center. The PBDC deputy chief is Chief Insp. Raynold—not Raymond—Rosero.

* * *

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Trillanes wants to call 'Gringo' as witness

By DJ Yap

DETAINED SEN. Antonio Trillanes IV has asked the Makati court hearing his coup d'etat case to summon Sen. Gregorio "Gringo" Honasan as a witness in the trial of the junior officers who staged the failed Oakwood mutiny of 2003.

Trillanes, along with 11 of his coaccused, wants to present Honasan, who was originally tagged as the mastermind of the Oakwood mutiny, "to rebut the prosecution's claim that he and the accused were involved in a conspiracy to commit coup d'etat."

In a three-page request submitted to Judge Oscar Pimentel of Makati Regional Trial Court Branch 148, the accused, through lawyer Reynaldo Robles, sought the issuance of a subpoena for Honasan.

It is the position of the soldiers that since Honasan, their alleged leader, had been absolved of guilt, they should be cleared, too.

They also asked the court to summon detained Brig. Gen. Danilo Lim to testify on the negotiations at the height of the Oakwood takeover on July 27, 2003, in which President Macapagal-Arroyo supposedly promised to spare all but the core leaders of the "Magdalo group" from criminal prosecution.

Trillanes and his coaccused want Honasan and Lim to appear at the hearing scheduled for Nov. 29 at 9 a.m.

State Prosecutor Juan Pedro Navera, a member of the justice department's prosecution panel, questioned the relevance of Honasan's testimony.

"We don't see how they can rebut the prosecution's evidence with Honasan's testimony. He's not an accused; he has no more involvement in the case," Navera said in a phone interview.

Honasan was initially charged as a leader of the mutineers but the charges against him were dropped by the Department of Justice and he was released shortly before the May elections.

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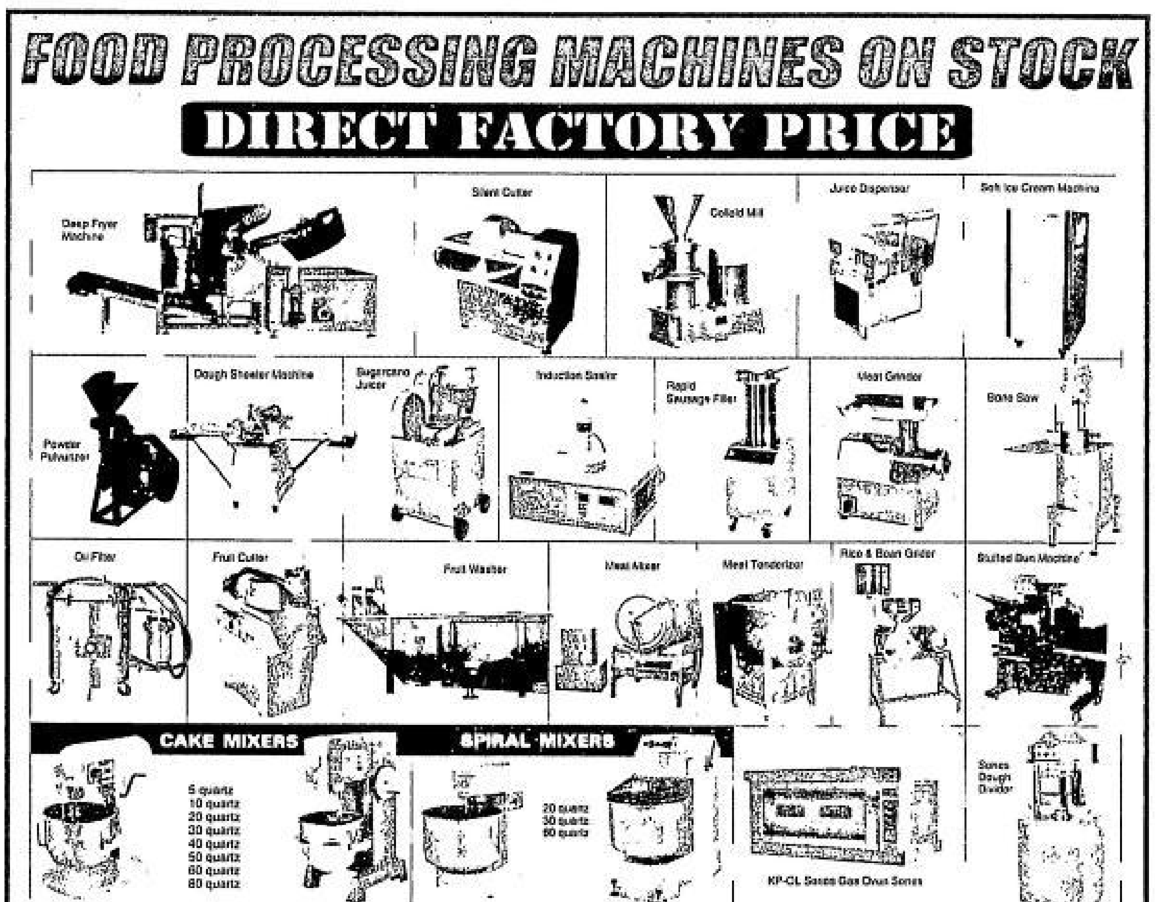

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‘Parol’ a big hit in Austria

PHILIPPINE *“PAROL”* OR CHRISTMAS lanterns are a big attraction at the annual Wiener Christkindlmarkt (Vienna Christmas Market), a popular and centuries-old Austrian holiday tradition that attracts millions of local residents and tourists.

A report from the Philippine Embassy in Austria said the event was highlighted on Nov. 19 by the ceremonial lighting of 60 colorful Philippine *parol* on a specially-designated “Philippine tree” at the Wiener Rathausplatz (Vienna City Hall square).

Ambassador to Austria Linglingay Lacanlale and Vienna City Councilor Elisabeth Vitouch presided over the ceremonies witnessed by members of the diplomatic corps, Vienna City officials, members of the Filipino community in Austria, as well as Christkindlmarkt’s crowd of promenaders and shoppers.

In her remarks, Lacanlale traced the origins of this most celebrated symbol of Filipino Christmas and the special place it occupies in Filipino families’ homes during the holiday season.

The ceremony was followed by a reception that treated guests to traditional Filipino Christmas delicacies such as *salabat* (ginger tea) and *kakanin* (rice cakes).

The event was a joint project of the Philippine Embassy in Vienna and the Vienna City government, with the support of the city government of San Fernando, Pampanga, and the Filipino community in Vienna.

A separate *parol* display featuring 30 Pampanga lanterns was inaugurated in another historic Austrian city, Salzburg, on Nov. 22.

The Philippine Embassy first introduced the Philippine *parol* in Vienna in 2006, when it opened a *parol* exhibit at a prominent *Viennese Palmenhaus* (tropical greenhouse) in an event that also commemorated the 60th anniversary of the establishment of Philippine-Austrian diplomatic relations. *Cynthia D. Balana*

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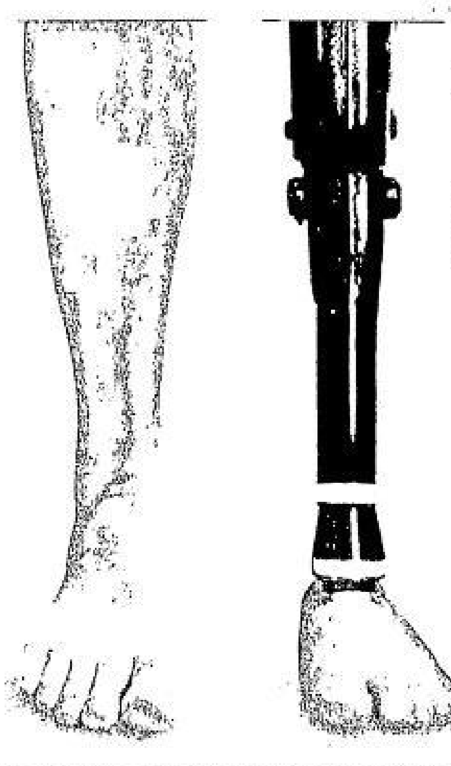

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Wrong call

EDITORIAL

WITH MEMORIES OF THE MANY DEATHS AND massive destruction wreaked by supertyphoon "Reming" a year ago, Bicolanos meekly trooped to evacuation centers and began storming heaven as "Mina" threatened late last week. The typhoon, packing center winds of 175 kilometers per hour and gusting up to 215 kilometers per hour, was going to rip through the Bicol Peninsula later in the week before exiting through Mindoro, according to Pagasa. By Friday, the evacuees had swelled to several hundred thousands, with Albay alone targeting the evacuation of up to 650,000 people. The next day, most of them began streaming back home, as the threat had passed.

What happened? Answered prayers, many Bicolanos said, recalling how people in the region swamped radio stations with messages urging prayers. Priests noted that attendance at Masses grew as "Mina" was reported to be approaching closer. When the typhoon changed course and spared Bicol, one priest said it was "sort of a miracle."

Who is to knock the power of prayer? Maybe, it was indeed a miracle, given the certainty with which Pagasa was tracking the path of the typhoon. But in this instance, it seems that the hand ordering the winds to take a different direction was more visible from afar than from here.

By late Friday afternoon, CNN was already reporting that "Mitag" (the typhoon's international code name) had changed direction and was heading for Central and Northern Luzon. However, Pagasa was still saying "Mina" was keeping to its westward path and bearing hard on Bicol. It was not until early Saturday morning that the local weather bureau announced that the typhoon would make landfall in the vicinity of Aurora or Isabela.

The time lag is important, even critical. Had the typhoon moved at a faster pace, Aurora, Isabela, Cagayan and other provinces hit by "Mina" would have been caught unprepared, and who knows how many lives would have been lost because of it.

Was CNN right and Pagasa wrong? Science and Technology Undersecretary Graciano Yumul asked the question and answered it himself, saying not at all. Yumul recalled that as early as Thursday, Pagasa was seeing two possible paths for "Mina," one cutting through Bicol and another through Aurora and Isabela. He said Pagasa had studied various climate models from other weather centers in Japan, Hong Kong and the US Joint Typhoon Warning Center (JTWC) in Hawaii. But as far as the Philippines is concerned, it is only Pagasa's forecast that is official and accountable. "Pagasa had to make a stand," he said. "Our stand—that the storm would track a western direction—was based on available information."

Obviously, Pagasa called it wrong, and all the gobbledygook mentioned by Yumul cannot make it right. Yumul said foreign weather centers use mathematical models in predicting the path of typhoons, while Pagasa uses "not only numerical but also real-time field station data." The implication apparently is that Pagasa's system is better and more reliable. So how come JTWC, which is CNN's source, called it right early on, and Pagasa did not? Instead of explaining how something wrong can be correct, Yumul and Pagasa officials ought to examine where it went wrong.

Although the Bicolanos were only too happy to see that Pagasa was wrong, the wrong information cost some Bicol provinces money it could ill afford to spend unnecessarily. Albay, for instance, spent P14 million to take thousands of its citizens out of harm's way and feed them, according to Gov. Jose Ma. Salceda. Although that amount cannot be said to have been spent badly, some of it could have been saved if Pagasa's forecast was a little better. Besides, a few more mistakes like this, and the government could sound like the boy who cried wolf too often, making it more difficult to convince people to suffer the inconvenience of relocation.

The country was quite lucky Mina did not turn out to be as destructive as earlier feared. But there will surely be other more powerful typhoons—if not this year, then in the coming years. Preparedness is essential for human survival, and that depends on accurate weather forecasts. Calamities should not test a people's faith—whether in God or in science.

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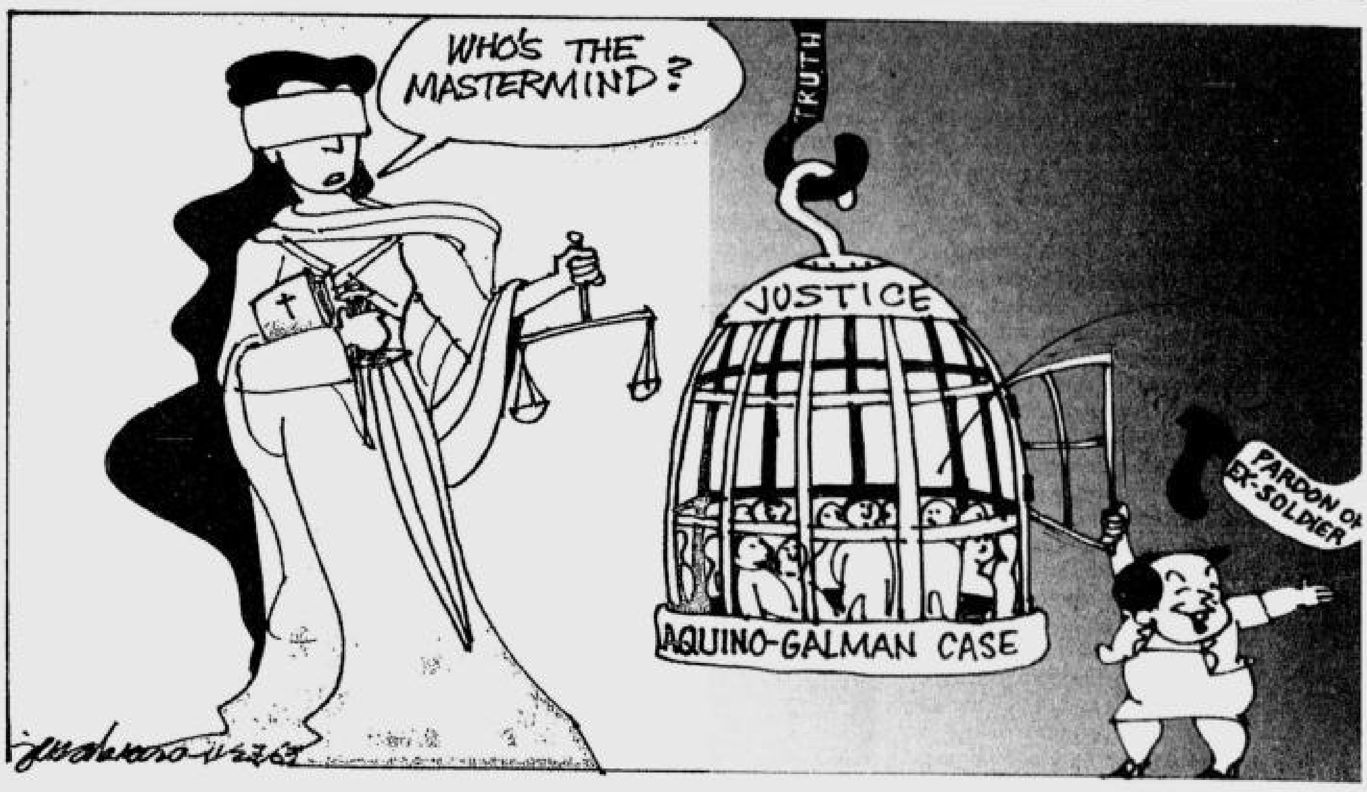

Mailbox

VIEWPOINT

Juan L. Mercado

THE COLUMN "STITCHING SHEETS OF LOOSE sand" (INQUIRER, 11/22/07) highlighted the call of Asian foresters for policy overhaul that would pry loose the resource stranglehold by the elite. In their new book, "A Cut For the Poor," they claim that a policy overhaul would give indigents a long-denied chance at humane lives. Our mailbox got these comments:

"As long as the President plays musical chairs with the secretary of environment and natural resources' post, the Philippines (cannot) save remaining forests," wrote William Granert of Soil & Water Conservation Foundation. "We need a professional who understands community-based management. One who'll put energy into long-range programs, not PR, like planting trees along highways."

"Logging whatever is left of Samar's natural forests could be the last nail to seal the coffin of a biodiversity wonder," forestry specialist Oscar Gendrano wrote. "Loggers will be the main beneficiary, not workers, nor the environment."

"Our virgin, natural dipterocarp forests dwindled from 6 million hectares, in the 1980s, to 800,000 hectares today. Implemented for 60 years, 'scientific' selective logging hasn't stopped forest decimation, first by loggers, then by *kaingineros* and land settlers. We've become a net importer of logs and other wood products. Millions of farmers eke out a living on eroded hills of mainly cogonal land."

The community-based forest management program (CBFM) would lease, for 25 years, more than 2.5 million hectares of former forests to upland communities. Organized into people's organizations by the Cooperative Development Authority, these must register with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

In Occidental Mindoro, 600 hectares are planted in CBFM areas under joint venture agreements. Such projects open opportunities for investment, by government and private firms. These result in: mature timber, livelihood funds, jobs and exclusive right to timber regrowth (coppice).

"Even the most greedy logger leaves a lot of seedlings, saplings, etc. behind," Patrick Dugan of Japan Foresty Consultants Association noted. There's no financial incentive to harvest this material. If left undisturbed, these seedlings (etc.) grow. And forest restoration occurs.

This has been convincingly demonstrated by few logging operations (e.g., Puyat and Sanvictores operations in Surigao, and the former Patic concession in Negros Oriental). Sadly, these are the exceptions, not the rule.

Communities can repeat these positive examples. "Policies that motivate them to do so need to be put in place. But that won't happen for so long as 'soundbytes,' rather than science and common-sense, remain the driving forces behind policy formulation." It's much easier for decision makers to crank out ill-advised policies that grab headlines, than to study. In the process, "they forget what leadership and the future of renewable resources (are) all about."

Reader reaction to "Chewing one's words" (INQUIRER, 11/20/07) reveals a groundswell of support for Gov. Eduardo Panlilio. By transparent governance, Panlilio collected P88.6 million from quarry taxes in 95 days. His predecessors took three and a half years to raise that amount. Concern heightened for the Pampanga governor's safety, as politicians sought to strip the governor of tax powers. Did that slice their take?

"I wish somebody with the selfless disposition and exceptional courage of Panlilio (worked) in my province of Batangas or in Quezon City where I reside," Ma. Gracia Riñoza-Plazo wrote: "One public servant like (him) is enough to keep the flame of hope alive during these days of national gloom .... Many will follow (his) lighted way..."

But Ramel Dalusung asserted that politicians have put out a contract on "Among Ed" for, among other things, "divulging the P500,000 pay-off" to local officials meeting in Malacañang. He gave the name of an Angeles policeman who signed up. Rogue cops from Pampanga, Bulacan and Malabon "received down payment on a P5-million bounty," he claimed. Panlilio must be protected because, "he is serving as the catalyst for a moral revolution (in) this country," beyond Pampanga.

Bert Peronilla wished that Panlilio, at the Senate hearing, had declared that the P500,000 dole was a bribe. "If it looks and smells like a bribe, then there is a very high probability that it is a bribe." There are people, meanwhile, who try to spook the governor by floating rumors that he'd be accused of bribery. That won't fly. The governor did not use the money. And he disclosed it.

This probe "will just die and be swept under the rug as usual. We may not always agree with Governor Panlilio. He is also human. I pray, meanwhile, that God guide him to continue doing the right things for the country."

"Justice as Circus" (INQUIRER, 10/30/07) analyzed Joseph Estrada's pardon vis-à-vis forgotten prisoners. "This illuminated the desperate, punishing (as opposed to rehabilitative) conditions in the country's jails," e-mailed Bert Write from the United States. "Convicts are more likely to rot away rather than survive, much less be reformed."

The column reminded me of the movie "30 Days." Could this well be a metaphor for the times we are in? I was overcome with a sense of despair. "What the 'hell are we living for? While we do have loved ones, friends and all, what's the point of going on with our lives, when travesties are unfolding right here, right now?"

"There are glimmers of hope, amid the blackness of despair, that enveloped our otherwise beautiful country. I do not claim to have the answer. Notwithstanding real-life vampires, I'm trying to figure it out in what little way I can (help)."

(E-mail: juanlmercado@gmail.com)

The larger view

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

THE NOBEL-PRIZE-WINNING INTERGOVERNmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) gave a note of urgency to the Bali meet next month that would decide the fate of the planet. It did so by saying the fate of the planet was at stake and there was little time, if any, left to save it.

A couple of weekends ago, it released its findings that said there was no debate about it, the greenhouse effect wasn't a natural cyclical change in climate, it was human-made. Unless the carbon emissions from industrial activity are curbed, the planet will die. The effects will be irreversible, and they will be catastrophic. The findings, as experts point out, do not leave any "wriggle room" for politicians to deny or dissimulate the impact of global warming. Global warming is happening even as we speak, and it is only a question of how slow—or fast—it will ravage the earth. Some predictions are enough to scare the hell out of you, more than anything Halloween or Hollywood has ever been able to dish out.

There is reason to be scared, and I'm glad there are more voices, from left to right, being added to rousing us to our senses—like cold water thrown on a besotted head. Things aren't just going to get worse before they get better, they're going to get worse before they get apocalyptic.

Richard Heinberg shows just how bad things are today in his much-praised book "Powerdown." It's not just climate change that's the problem, it's several thing. Singly, they pose the direst threat to the planet; taken together, they augur ill for the survival, not to speak of the future, of humankind. These factors also explain some of the horrendous events that are already taking place in our midst, from wars to famine, from super storms to super recessions. They are:

One, resource depletion. The primary source of energy that powered the miracle of the 20th century, oil and gas, is near to being depleted. The party is over, the Petroleum Age is gone. "It was this energy windfall that enabled us to transform our way of life from oxcarts and Pony Express messengers to jetliners and cell phones," but it's also its dissipation that now forces us to live far more scaled-down lives.

Two, continued population growth. The total human population reached 6 billion in 1998, and increased by 400 million in the next six years, nearly the population of North America. Related to this:

Three, falling food production. For most of the 20th century, food production outpaced population growth. That is no longer so. World grain harvests during the last five years have leveled off with population growth and will soon start lagging behind. That is so because of the loss of arable land, fresh water shortages, and bad weather, on one hand, and steep population growth, on the other. Throughout the 20th century, the predictions of impending famine were headed off by increased food production. But population has almost doubled since. "The Population Bomb" was published in 1968, food production is falling, and ecosystems are failing.

Four, environmental degradation. The dramatic growth and prosperity of the 20th century took place under a relatively benign climate. That climate is gone, ruined by the same growth and prosperity that took place during that time. Predictions about Europe and North America being plunged into a new Ice Age, as a result of melting Greenland glaciers grinding the Gulf Stream to a halt, are no longer just the stuff of science fiction and movies, they are the stuff of science and computer simulations of the near future.

Five, unsustainable levels of US debt and potential collapse of the US dollar. The gargantuan American debt, as a result of the dollar being the international currency, has led to pressures for the US dollar to devalue. But if the dollar is devalued steeply, other countries may stop investing in American stocks and Treasury securities, which could trigger a collapse of the currency and the entire global financial system upon which it is based.

Six, global political instability. As energy sources become depleted, the choice is either to scale down and cooperate or to grab whatever is left and look out for No. 1. American leaders clearly prefer the second option. "The US declaration that it has a right to 'preemptive war' threatens to plunge international affairs into a new era of lawlessness."

In fact we're already seeing the unraveling of these forces in the super storms, hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, earthquakes and other violent upheavals of nature over the last several years, in the equally violent upheavals of human beings in the Middle East and elsewhere, in the war to control energy sources, in the continuing fall of the US dollar, in famine and want that is gripping more and more parts of the world.

Can something be done about this?

Only if we get to be truly scared of what's ahead of us and fill ourselves with large doses of realism. Not least is recognizing that the collapse is bound to happen, "collapse" in the technical sense of "a substantial reduction in social complexity ... which can occur either quickly and chaotically, or in a more gradual and managed fashion...in the best case a planned contraction, in which population levels and per-capita resource usage would be scaled back dramatically over decades." And recognizing that the "collapse" is inevitable, demanding desperately, aggressively, angrily from this planet's leaders that they stop the madness of making blithe assurances and relying on miraculous scientific breakthroughs to rationalize not changing, and start engineering the best-case alternative of a planned contraction.

The eye of the super storm is here. It's just a question of how we fortify ourselves to take the brunt of it.

John Paul II's example of forgiveness

POLITICAL TIDBITS

Belinda Olivares-Cunanan

I DON'T KNOW IF THE HARSH WORDS OF SEN. Benigno Aquino III, uttered after President Macapagal-Arroyo conditionally pardoned Sgt. Pablo Martinez last week, reflected the heartfelt sentiments of his mother, former President Cory Aquino. The young Aquino opined that the pardon must have been issued in retaliation for his mother's call for GMA's resignation. Such severe words may be understood in the light of rumors that Noynoy is angling to be the running mate of Sen. Mar Roxas, the Liberal Party's presidential candidate for 2010. But maintaining an "unforgiving" heart toward the suspects in the assassination of Ninoy Aquino doesn't jibe with the nation's image of his widow, who is widely looked up to as a deeply religious woman and Christian leader.

* * *

As we mark the birth anniversary of this much-loved Filipino hero, we hope that his family can forgive Martinez and the other soldiers convicted of his murder. Especially since it has been pointed out that they probably were mere pawns in a political power play, who perhaps never knew the mastermind of that evil plot. Besides, it has been 24 years since. Perhaps, the best example of Christian forgiveness—after the one given by the Master Himself on the Cross—came from Pope John Paul II; he visited his assailant in prison and embraced him. The Pope's lesson was doubtless uppermost in the minds of the Catholic bishops when they congratulated GMA for pardoning Martinez—a rare instance of the bishops concurring with her—even as they called for pardon also for the rest of the soldiers in prison. Let's hope the CBCP can influence Ms Aquino's heart.

* * *

The following case illustrates how badly Congress needs to pass the Cheaper Medicines Bill. Civic leader Henrietta P. Reverente of Quezon City recently wrote Dr. Charles Chante, medical director of Cardinal Santos Medical Center, to protest its overpricing of drugs and medical supplies. She was able to compare prices when her housemaid was confined in the hospital's service ward. She was shocked to find that its items were priced 100-500 percent more than they are at Mercury Drug. For instance, disposable needle G20, 1.5, had a markup of 462 percent. Herself the wife of a doctor, Reverente has access to data from several tertiary hospitals in Metro Manila, which show average markups of only about 40 percent. She opined that it's unfortunate that a hospital, named after a respected Christian leader, charges even patients in service wards, who could hardly afford medical care, such huge markups.

There must be a way to regulate the private hospital industry in this regard. I realize that some hospitals are trying to keep their heads above the water, but there must be some limit to overpricing. As Reverente put it, with medicines here already much higher than those in our Asean neighbors; hospitals ought not to fleece patients, especially the poorer ones, for where else can they go?

* * *

Two recent events prove just how fast-growing the market among wine-loving Pinoys is. The South African Embassy, led by Ambassador and Ms Peter Vermuelen, hosted a gala dinner at Restaurant 9501 of the ABS-CBN Network in Quezon City last Nov. 19, to introduce to Manila wine importers and food connoisseurs six representatives of famous SA wineries in the lovely Cape Town area. Led by acknowledged Cape "wine masters" Junel Vermuelen and Bennie Howard, they were warmly welcomed by such importers as Ralph Wines & Spirits, Future Trade, and Zen of Asia. According to this wine mission, which later flew to Cebu to conquer its big market, SA "probably offers the widest varieties of wines, from value for money to wines, to those that live up to the world's best."

With more than 350 years behind it, the SA wine industry is said to be the oldest of the New World wine-producing countries. Billed as the eighth largest in the world, it has an annual production of 700 million liters of wine, about 35 million liters of brandy and total exports of 28 percent. In addition to the generous sampling of wines and brandies, guests were also treated to a special dinner cooked by three chefs (assisted by Restaurant 9501's cooks) flown in from the Cape by South African Airways. Traditional Cape cuisine included such favorites as "creamed Waterblommetjie soup with biltong dust" and pan-fried springbok loin, and even minced crocodile meat flown in as entrée.

Not to be outdone, the French Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines sponsored the following evening a "Soiree Beaujolais 2007" at the Harbor Garden Tent of the Sofitel Philippine Plaza on Roxas Boulevard. The soiree featured the wines of the famous Loire Valley of France, a sumptuous buffet, and an exciting raffle with big prizes.

* * *

Last year, the Management Association of the Philippines presented a most successful Christmas concert, organized by realtor Eddie H. Yap, at the Sanctuario de San Antonio in Forbes Park. It featured the best-loved carols of all time, as well as our own Pinoy favorites as sung by top operatic stars and distinguished choirs from around Metro Manila. Next Thursday, Dec. 4, 2007, MAP will again give a gala Christmas Concert at 7:30 p.m. at the plenary hall of the PICC in the CCP Complex, with MAP's select projects as beneficiaries. The concert will again feature such top tenors and sopranos as Karla Gutierrez (president of the Philippine Opera Company) Elaine Lee, Rachel Gerodias and Vienna-based tenor Abdul Candao, as well as singer-actress Vina Morales, the Philippine Madrigal Singers, Chiang Kai Shek College Choir, and the Metro Manila Community Orchestra under the baton of Josefino Chino Toledo. The only tickets available are in the P2,000, P1,500, P1,000 and P500 categories. Call MAP 751-1149 or Ticketworld 891-9999.

Ate Dolly

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

WE ALL CALLED HER "ATE DOLLY," BEING THE first of the five children of Daddy Maning and Mommy Marty David.

When we first started dating, my husband Pie was full of stories of his Ate Dolly: how she dominated her siblings, even dictating what courses they would take in college, and how her mercurial temper left all of them in perpetual dread of crossing her. But when we first met in the early 1980s, when she and her husband Himer, together with her sister Nene and Nene's husband Dan and their children, came home for a visit, I found her quite charming and lively.

She was the smallest of all five siblings, which made me wonder all the more how she came to dominate the family so. And up to the last time I saw her two years ago, she looked decades younger than her chronological age, the effect enhanced by her love for colorful outfits, big hair and four-inch high-heeled shoes, which, she says, had to be custom made because no stores carried such a small size. She peppered her conversation with anecdotes about our relatives and her officemates, and amused me no end by dragging me to multiplexes where she would pull me into another theater after we watched the feature we paid for, arguing that movies cost so much we were entitled to watch two for the price of one!

Her husband Himer Romana was, like her, a medical technologist and, more important, an Elvis fanatic. In their Long Island home, he filled the basement with Elvis paraphernalia and collected perhaps every vinyl record that "The King" recorded. Perhaps as a result of a middle age crisis, Himer decided some years back to perform as an Elvis impersonator on his days off. Dolly teased him about this, but confided that she would often be the first to rise to her feet and cheer wildly after a performance, leading the rest of the club audience no choice but to join her.

* * *

DESPITE her size and her fragile appearance, Ate Dolly was a brave, brash young woman.

She had wanted to be a doctor, but in her desire to live and work in the United States, she took the shorter medical technology course and, once she obtained a license, set about to get a working visa. Once in the States, she pushed her sister Nene to take the same course, and after a few years they were both able to petition for their parents.

It was understood that the three remaining siblings—Kuya Nonoy, Pie and their youngest sister Bel—would follow the same path. But while Nonoy and his family took some years and a circuitous process to get to the States, Pie and Bel decided that staying put was the best option for them. I remember Mommy Marty talking to me on the phone, after Pie told her about our plans to marry, and asking me if I could postpone the wedding at least until Pie could migrate to the US. "I think you should talk to your son," I replied, and I'm glad—to say the least—that he decided to stay by my side.

Pie was just 13 or so, and a thin, sickly boy suffering from rheumatic heart disease when Ate Dolly and Nene left. When they came home for a visit, they told him, they were shocked by how much he had changed, and decided, since he had by then been working in San Miguel Corp. for some years, that perhaps staying in the country was the best option for him.

* * *

CALL it misguided charity, if you will, but if Pie and Bel would not migrate, then Ate Dolly decided she would help as many members of the family to do so.

She helped anybody who expressed a wish to seek his or her fortune in the US, tirelessly following up visa applications and travel arrangements. She would even put up in the spare bedroom in the basement relatives who had just arrived and were still in search of work.

During Kuya Nonoy's early years in New York, she hired him as some sort of assistant overseer of the various rental properties that she and Himer owned, and let him and his wife Yoly live in one of their apartments.

It was Dolly and Himer who introduced us to Tad's Steaks, a rather rundown, down-at-the-heels eatery on Times Square that catered mainly, I found out, to the migrant population. But to Pie and I, Tad's was the ultimate steakhouse, and to this day I remember with relish the huge slabs of meat that a sweaty counter man would plunk on our metal plates before pouring a scoop of thin gravy over it.

What I am most grateful to Dolly, though, was the friendship she formed with my sister Neneng and her children, virtually adopting them and inviting them to family functions and sessions "for the girls," usually raucous nights-out in the various Manhattan hot spots. This was the 1980s, remember, the Age of Disco.

* * *

AFTER HER eldest child Eileen, a prodigy on whom Ate Dolly poured her dreams of fame and riches, married the scion of a Greek-American family that owned a string of radio stations (Eileen was in the marketing arm of the company), Dolly bloomed into a doting grandma.

This workaholic, who with Himer held down two or even three jobs at a time, quit her job and turned into a full-time grandma, looking after Eileen's daughter in their sprawling Connecticut home. But to no one's surprise, the domestic routine soon bored Ate Dolly, and when Eileen and her husband and her two young girls moved to Long Island, Dolly opted to be a weekend grandma. Besides Eileen, Dolly and Himer had two boys: Jimmy and Ryan, who is married to Mercedes and lives in Los Angeles.

A few months ago, Ate Dolly suffered an aneurism and never fully recovered consciousness. She passed away the other day, leaving behind a lasting image of a small, vivacious and truly charming woman who embraced life and its challenges and tried to bend it to her strong will.

Kill the hero

NEWSSTAND

John Nery

A LINE CONNECTS "BEOWULF," THE MEDIEVAL Old English saga now reincarnated on the silver screen, directly to our own epics, like those that sing of Lam-ang of the Ilocanos and Sandayo of the Suban-ons. That line continues, through the martyr's narrative that Ninoy Aquino wrote with his own blood, right down to our day.

It is the quest for the hero-protector, or rather the stubborn notion, persisting over the centuries and across civilizations, that one man will emerge to save the people. "He is our hope," the Suban-on guman sings, "To keep our waters,/To watch over our springs."

Lost in the howling wilderness that our politics has led us to, harassed by the Grendels of our own making, we feel that need more than ever: A man, "no one else like him alive," will yet lead us.

* * *

Conversations about the sorry state of our politics these days often turn on the hope that someone will start a chain reaction of radical change. Perhaps Among Ed, the priest-turned-governor of Pampanga, will be the focus of a new politics of participation? Perhaps Tony Meloto of Gawad Kalinga can inspire politics with the power of example?

Even the hopes some oppositionists have nursed, that Speaker Jose de Venecia will turn against his political allies, starting with the President, tap the same deep vein in our thinking: One brave man, like Lam-ang, can inspire the defeat of legion: "Oh, so many were they/ Nobody could count how many!"

It is this role of "man for the people" that presidential aspirants are auditioning for, in various guises: the man on horseback, the self-made man, the man of the market, the man from Subic. Even Margaret Thatcher's "the best man for the job is a woman" is making a comeback.

* * *

The troubling thing about all these epics (all the way back to Homer, in fact) is that, despite being the work of a collective imagination, they are elitist in nature. They celebrate the feats, to borrow from Seamus Heaney's translation of "Beowulf," of the "highborn and powerful."

* * *

Robert Zemeckis own take on "Beowulf" is a diverting must-see, but mainly for the daring script, written by recent Manila visitor Neil Gaiman and "Pulp Fiction" screenwriter Roger Avary.

(The use of digital motion-capture is distracting, and in the case of Grendel's evil mother, inexplicably de-eroticizing. Angelina Jolie's idealized, tattoo-free nakedness is a daydreamer's idea of sex.)

I think it was the Boston Globe that described the movie perfectly, as a "pulp epic." In their retelling, Gaiman and Avary create a hero on a more human scale. He still does battle with fabulous sea monsters (like Lam-ang, who spears "the biggest crocodile") and possesses supernatural stamina (like Aliguyon of the Ifugao, who fights his rival for a year and a half before taking a break). He still traffics in the marvelous (like Sandayo, who tames a river by forcing its waters back to its source). But like modern man, he has his own demons: he cannot tell a story without embroidering it, and he cannot resist temptation.

This is a hero more our size.

* * *

I was not one of those who went to the airport on Aug. 21, 1983 to welcome Ninoy home, but I can understand the appeal this exile held for those who did: He was the "man for the people," returning at long last.

In one of the many instructive footnotes in "Cacique Democracy in the Philippines," Benedict Anderson cautions us—those of us who imagine the Filipino nation—about "the current martyrology surrounding the assassinated senator." He was writing in 1988, which makes me wonder why the great scholar misunderstood the place Ninoy held in the country's heart. Ninoy is worth commemorating not because he was highborn and powerful, although in his single term in the Senate he did fascinate people with his cinematic use of a personal helicopter and his aura of easy entitlement. He is worth celebrating because he is, precisely, a martyr, not the hero of an epic.

What makes him the representative Filipino is the seven years he spent in prison and the three years he spent in exile, which utterly changed him. Without these years in the political and spiritual desert, his death wouldn't have mattered as much. Indeed, without these years, I doubt whether he would have made the decisions that would lead to his death in the first place.

Already, we can see in Ninoy's self-sacrifice the seeds of an anti-epic. Whereas the hero in "Beowulf" or "The Harvest Song of Aliguyon" saves his people or achieves feats of derring-do by becoming more of himself, a martyr saves by dying to himself.

To find our way out of the wilderness, we need more martyrs, not heroes.

* * *

A word about, well, the "word-hoard" of our own epics. They are wonderfully evocative. In Jovita Ventura Castro's translation of the composite text compiled by Leopoldo Y. Yabes, for example, the Lam-ang epic includes this almost-throwaway line from a battle scene: "Like the rain in the evening/ The spears fell." This sent me burrowing through my books, to recover two images it had reminded me of. First, a 50-year-old word-picture from Philip Larkin's "The Whitsun Weddings," with its unforgettable close: "there swelled/ A sense of falling, like an arrow-shower/ Sent out of sight, somewhere becoming rain." And then a page from the back of the breviary, where I found St. Augustine writing epistolary advice: "The monks in Egypt are said to offer frequent prayers, but these are very short and hurled like swift javelins."

A writer, Borges once wrote, "creates" his own precursors. A reader too.

* * *

Email: jnery@inquirer.com.ph

The underside of chauvinism

YOUNG BLOOD

Ernesto Dedel III

We want to know what the young are thinking about. What are their thoughts on current issues? We welcome contributions from the twentysomething and below.—**Ed.**

WHAT IF TODAY IS THE END OF ETERNITY? WHAT IF throughout eternity I had lived and died on this earth several times, and each time I lived I fell for just one woman? What if the bodies of all those women I loved belonged to just one soul—an entity sent to live on earth each time I was born? What if I now stand before her—the woman, the soul who had captivated me again and again? What will I tell her? How will I end our eternal story of love?

And now, the words start coming...

My love, in almost every lifetime that we were together, our roles were the same. I was your protector and you were my healer. In times of war, I was always the valiant soldier who rescued you from the enemy and you were the affectionate lady who healed my wounds. In times of peace, I'd be the one to save you from poverty and you'd be the one to make me appreciate my wealth. Until the 21st century came.

In this century, you were born strong while I was born weak. It's the ultimate chance for us to reverse our roles, for you to be the savior and for me to be the healer. You would be the genius who'd accomplish breakthroughs and I'd be your quiet inspiration. I'd be the one to make you feel relaxed when you come home exhausted after a day of struggle. You'd be the one to bring home the trophies and I'd be the one to show them off to my friends. I'd be the one to take pride in being married to an accomplished person. But such dreams would never come true.

I'm not supposed to even dream these dreams, to entertain the idea of being married to someone much more accomplished than me. I should be the one getting the greater glory. I'm the one who should be the protector and rescuer. I should never be the dependent one. I ought to be the one to bring home the trophies and you are the one who'd simply ogle at them. That's the way history has taught me to think. These are the standards that society forced me to believe.

That's why in your first triumph, my first impulse was to outdo you. When you went home exhausted, I refused to caress you. Because I didn't want to be reminded of my inferiority, of the reality that you were contributing more to the world than I ever could, of the fact that the most meaningful thing I could do was to be your loving husband.

But why don't I just let you be the stronger one? Why can't I just happily let you enjoy the success you deserve? Forgive me. I know I have sinned because I have deprived you of a perfect life—the perfect life you willingly gave me in each of all the previous lifetimes we had together.

I know you're thinking that things could have been much better if I had swallowed my pride early on. But you know what? I did that. I willingly swallowed my pride. I was more than willing to be the unimportant husband, to be the quiet inspiration whose only real purpose in life was to let you succeed. I was willing to remain unseen beneath the shadow of an intellectual giant. But society just wouldn't tolerate that. It was a time when women could acceptably say that they were looking for a financially stable spouse and men could not, when a man saving his beloved woman from poverty was considered romantic and a woman doing the same thing for his man was considered promiscuous. Wives like you had the right to shine and be renowned. But husbands like me had no right to be overshadowed by their wives. Wives like you had the right to provide for their children. But husbands like me had no right to provide less than what their wives could for the family.

I was willing to accept my inferiority. But would your mother and father have been happy to see you married to a man far less accomplished than you? Would your friends have not been worried that you loved a man who could offer you so little? And wouldn't you yourself also have expected me to be much stronger and far more accomplished than you? Wouldn't you have wanted me to be the better provider for our family? Wouldn't you . . .

"I'm sorry. I didn't mean to take it out on you. I know I'm also to blame. I should have just turned a deaf ear to the irrational demands of society. I should have trusted you and believed that you wanted my love more than my strength. I just wish that it had been possible for me to just love you and not hear those derogatory words from my own male friends. I just wish that it was possible to build a home for the two of us without worrying that it's much smaller than the ones you could buy for yourself. I just wish that it was possible for me to show off your awards to the visitors without them expecting to see mine afterwards. That way I wouldn't have to see the half-concealed pity in their eyes whenever I had to tell them that I had none. I just wish that I could find bliss in seeing you reach your dream without me having to feel this chauvinistic envy.

My love, I didn't choose to be born into a world fraught with chauvinistic history. And I didn't choose to be part of a society where boys are raised to become chauvinistic. God knows how I've tried to overcome the pressures that this sexist society has exerted on me. I don't really expect you to forgive me. Just understand me.

But you know what? Maybe, all that is about to be put behind us now . Eternity is about to end and no one—not even God—knows what's about to come next. Why don't you join me in the next eternal adventure? Let us be together in praying to the next God (who may not have to be addressed as He), in living on the next earth and in ascending to the next heaven. Maybe this time, it would already be possible for men like me to feel love without dealing with the pressure of having to be bigger and stronger than our female lovers. Maybe, I'd no longer be ridiculed for finding ultimate happiness in just inspiring you. Maybe, it would already be possible to deserve you even if I'm too weak to protect you. Maybe . . .

Wait! I'm not even supposed to think that way, am I? I can feel your anger as I come up with those unmanly thoughts. Do you despise me now for lacking the will to be your protector? For not being man enough to assert my superiority? Do you abhor me for my weakness? For my failure to meet society's expectations? If so, please tell me! Tell me how we should spend the next eternity.

Or do you think I'm weak because I'm asking you to make the difficult decision when I—the man—should be the one to make it? Or . . damn! I no longer know how I should think! Enlighten me now. Please.

My love . . . speak up!

Ernesto Dedel III, 24, is a customer service representative of Sitel Customer Care Philippines Inc.

NOTICE TO YOUNGBLOOD CONTRIBUTORS:

Send your contributions by e-mail to youngblood@inquirer.com.ph together with your address, age and the school, course and year you're enrolled in or, if employed, the position you're holding and the company you work with. Contributions to Youngblood should not have been previously published.

How to safeguard the Comelec

FOR OUR COUNTRY TO ATTAIN progress, it is necessary to institutionalize the virtue of honesty in all government institutions. Only those who possess an outstanding record of public service and an untarnished reputation must be appointed to manage these institutions.

In this light, we suggest that the President appoint to the Commission on Elections only those who meet the following requirements:

- Must not be a member of or affiliated with any political party.
- Must not be related up to the third civil degree of consanguinity to the appointing authority; neither must the appointee be an ally by close personal friendship, social and fraternal connections and professional employment.
- Must have at least seven years of untainted record and work experience as a Comelec official.
- Must have at least eight years of clean work experience as a judge and/or as a fiscal, and must be a member of good standing of the Philippine bar.
- Must have at least 10 years of untainted work experience in comprehensive prosecution and decision-making in complex cases; and a thorough managerial expertise derived from employment in a constitutional body (a prime advantage for the position of chairman).
- Must not have been a candidate for any elective national or local government office.
- Must be widely known for probity and independence.

The Comelec, as a constitutional body, must be free and independent from any form of intervention from anyone—even from the appointing authority—especially on matters concerning electoral processes and decisions. This is the only way to ensure that the sovereign will of the people, the supreme authority of government, will be respected.

In recent years, the Comelec has been perceived as among the many government institutions that have lost their credibility. There is now a strong public clamor for the restoration of integrity in the Comelec, by appointing individuals that have outstanding public service records, unassailable personal character and known probity.

—LANE V. AFABLE,
secretary general,
Center for Anti-Graft and
Corruption Prevention

Speedy trial? Delayed cases vs Imelda not her fault

I AM WRITING AS COUNSEL FOR Imelda Marcos in reaction to Justice Isagani Cruz's Nov. 4 column.

1. Ms Marcos never deliberately delayed the administration of her criminal cases. If delays were caused, they could only have been attributable to the prosecution.

The cases referred to by Justice Cruz were filed way back in 1991. Ms Marcos was only 62 years old then. In a few more months, she will turn 79. Despite the lapse of 17 long years, my client does not see any end to all her cases in the near future, not to mention her anguish on account of them.

From their inception up to the present, the prosecution has presented, and is still presenting, lawyer Frank Chavez who has testified at least 33 times (and still counting). This is not to mention the postponements and cancellations of hearings done in between at the behest of the prosecution. In the past years, I orally moved for earlier settings if only to expedite the proceedings. But due to the Sandiganbayan's loaded calendar, the oral motions were not positively acted upon.

2. Cruz's "suspicion"—that Ms Marcos is "probably hoping that, if convicted, she will also be treated like Joseph Estrada"—seems bereft of any sufficient basis. Ms Marcos could have gotten something better than that a long time ago. In 1990, the PCGG assisted by Chavez, then the solicitor general, and a certain Vic Barrios and US federal prosecutor Debra Livingstone, tried to negotiate with Marcos' lawyer John Bartko and some members of her family for her to plead guilty to a simple misdemeanor and pay the amount of $50 million (as payment for the US prosecutors). In exchange for this, all cases then in the Philippines against the Marcoses would be dropped. She flatly rejected the offer.

3. In the unfortunate event that the Sandiganbayan renders a conviction, experience tells us that it usually takes years to obtain a final resolution of the cases before the Supreme Court. Considering Ms Marcos' age by then, it would be unimaginable how she could prioritize the thought of being pardoned. Worse, she may not be around anymore to seek that relief.

4. For Cruz's information, another set of criminal cases against Ms Marcos in a regional trial court in Metro Manila was recently stalled by the prosecution witness' filing of a petition for certiorari, prohibition and injunction before the Court of Appeals. Against the vigorous motion of Ms Marcos to lift the temporary restraining order issued by the Court of Appeals (so that the criminal proceedings below could proceed), the latter proceeded to render a preliminary injunction. This has successfully indefinitely deferred the criminal proceedings against her.

5. The impression of "unavoidable conviction" is not only speculative but misguided. Of the unimaginable number of criminal cases filed against my client since 1986 or shortly thereafter, most were dismissed during the preliminary stage. None of those that proceeded resulted in a final conviction. Around August 2006, Ms Marcos was **acquitted** by the Sandiganbayan in criminal case 18742. Last April 20, the Regional Trial Court of Quezon City, Branch 105 **acquitted** Ms Marcos of all charges in criminal cases Q-91-24382-83, 91-24388-89 and 91-24392.

This letter should put in better perspective the motive behind Ms Marcos' filing of the motion for speedy trial.

—ROBERT A.C. SISON,
21/F Citibank Tower,
Makati City

Fix hazardous LRT leaks now

I CAN'T HELP BUT NOTICE THE large amounts of rainwater seeping through the beams of the LRT rail system on Taft Avenue when it rains. These large drops fall on windshields and roofs of vehicles below. Most drivers don't bother at all about the possible damage or danger the seeping water can cause or pose.

However, if you observe Taft Avenue on rainy days, particularly at intersections, you would see pedestrians crossing the busy road as if they're playing *patintero* with the puddles of water right within pedestrian lanes as well as with the dripping water from the LRT railway; or, while taking shelter underneath the railway system, getting drenched.

Not only does the seeping water inconvenience a lot of pedestrians and motorists, it also wastes taxpayers' money. The water also floods the center islands below, thus destroying the plants filling them. The plants act as air sheds.

This problem in effect undercuts one of the 11 priority programs of Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim, specifically the reduction of air pollution through rehabilitation of parks and green areas—not to mention similar programs of the other cities through which the railway system stretches through, as well as the national laws on environmental protection and conservation.

In this regard, I am calling the attention of the officials of the Light Rail Transit Authority (LRTA) to act on this worsening problem, which is a growing public nuisance. Fixing the leaks would greatly benefit the people, the local government units, the environment and the LRTA as well. The continuing failure to act on this problem will eventually draw more criticism from concerned citizens, environmentalists and local officials who do their best to keep their localities clean and green.

—J MIKHAIL NACINO,
flanker22miko@yahoo.com

Only 27 journalists killed, not 33

THIS REFERS TO THE NEWS item, "SC chief bewails silence on killing of journalists" (INQUIRER, 11/17/07), which reported that "since 2003, 33 Filipino journalists were killed in the line of duty."

The Supreme Court might have different parameters in recording the number of journalists killed in the line of duty. We respect that. But we would like to share the information that as far as the PNP Task Force Usig is concerned, we have recorded only 27 work-related killings of media practitioners since 2001. Out of these 27 cases, 21 are already in different courts, one in the prosecutor's office and five remain under investigation.

To date, 14 suspects have been arrested, 11 have surrendered and four have been convicted in relation to the killings of Edgar Damalerio and Marlene Esperat.

The records show that as a first pillar and member of the criminal justice system, the law enforcers, particularly the Philippine National Police, have already investigated and filed appropriate charges in court against the suspects in media killings.

We would like to assure the public of the continuous efforts of the PNP to prevent similar incidents from happening, and to arrest as well as to prosecute the suspects in the remaining cases.

—JEFFERSON P. SORIANO, Ph.D.,
CSEE, police director, (DSC),
commander, Task Force Usig,
Philippine National Police,
Directorate for Investigation
and Detective Management,
Camp Crame, Quezon City

Maybe an INQUIRER photo exhibit?

WHAT A BEAUTIFUL PICTURE (of a tribesman scooping water from a clean mountain stream) that was on the INQUIRER's front page last Nov. 11! Congratulations to Edwin Bacasmas.

I wish there's some way we can view and appreciate all the spectacular front-page photographs that the INQUIRER has featured—without the INQUIRER logo screaming out loud in the center!

Maybe the INQUIRER can organize a photo exhibit or even come up with a coffee-table book. More power to the INQUIRER staff and its contributing photographers!

—MARIA ELENA LA O,
86 Kennedy St.,
North Greenhills 1502,
San Juan City

Nothing wrong with 'Smile'

I FIND DISAGREEABLE THE CRITICISM leveled by the Airlines Operating Council (AOC) at the "Smile" program of the Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA) at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia). (INQUIRER, 11/14/07)

To start with, the airlines themselves leave us with little reason to smile for delayed flights and lost baggage. Add to this the gruff treatment by airline employees of passengers at the counters.

Likewise, it's not that the MIAA had asked airport workers to smile and appear cheerful in order to cover up the problems at the Naia 1 and Naia 2. To be candid about it, Naia 1 and 2 are already operating well beyond their structural capacity, and they are aging. Thus, no matter how the MIAA addresses these problems, more problems can be expected to crop up.

For this reason, we should support efforts by the MIAA to open for public use the mothballed Naia 3, which should ease air traffic and passenger volume at Naia 1 and 2.

At any rate, what's wrong with smiling when the exercise has been scientifically proven to lighten our load and make our problems bearable? To the AOC officials: Smile, and avoid coronaries. It's for your own good!

—JERRY VILLAFLOR,
Blk 19 Lot 26, Celina Home 2,
Deparo, Caloocan City

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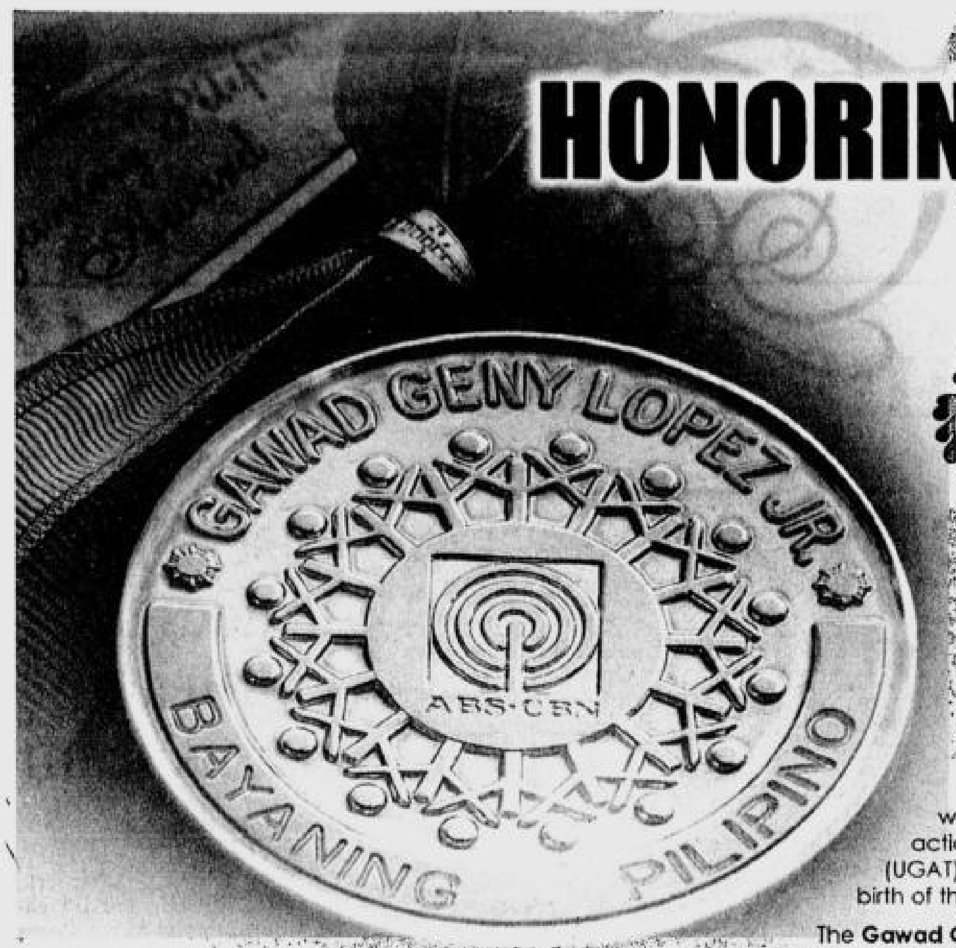
HONORING FILIPINOS THROUGH

Gawad Geny Lopez Jr. Bayaning Pilipino 2007



In 1994, a Filipina domestic helper in Hong Kong was ran over by a car when she saved her ward, a Chinese boy. The heroic story inspired then ABS-CBN Chairman *Eugenio Lopez Jr* to action. He called *Fr. Nilo Tanalega, SJ* of the Ugnayan at Tulong para sa Maralitang Pamilya (UGAT) Foundation to conceptualize a project that would honor these Filipino heroes. This led to the birth of the **Bayaning Pilipino Awards**, now known as the **Gawad Geny Lopez Jr.**

The **Gawad Geny Lopez, Jr. Bayaning Pilipino Awards** gives tribute and recognition to those Filipinos who, in spite of their own weaknesses and difficulties, still put the needs of others above their own. Through this, they emerge not only as role models in their communities but also heroes of our country.

Initially, there were three main categories: Individual, Family and Institution but as the years passed, Filipinos from more sectors are being recognized. Hence, the youth and teachers, were included. Not long afterward, the Bayaning Pilipino Awards sa America was launched via The Filipino Channel (TFC) in May of 2005. Reaching far and wide looking for remarkable kababayans in different countries and fields, it continues its search for those commendable Pinoys.

After the deliberations held at ABS-CBN, the following have been declared winners for this year's Bayaning Pilipino Search:

DARYL FAMISARAN
Valencia, Bukidnon, Region X

INDIVIDUAL Category

From the name itself, Bukidnon is known for its many and great mountains. But this did not stop Daryl Famisaran Valencia as he aimed and succeeded in opening the Socio-economic Uplift Literacy Anthropological Development Studies or SULADS which was formerly closed due to lack of funds and volunteers. Starting out as a student volunteer himself, it was no easy task for him as he looked for the support required to open SULADS, both in terms of financial support and the volunteers needed for manpower. Not only that, it was also an enormous task for him to climb the mountains just to be able to meet with the communities. It was also an added challenge to convince the Lumads who were unfamiliar with the new idea of studying to join his group. Despite the danger, Daryl Valencia continues to climb even the highest mountain just to give education to those who are willing to learn.

EDITHA CAÑETE-MIGUEL, MD
Puerto Princesa, Palawan, Region IV-B

INDIVIDUAL Category

Editha Canete-Miguel, more commonly known as Doc Ding, has braved the province of Palawan to answer the Lord's calling for her, "Go and share the good news." But not only does Doc Ding share the truths and promises of God found in the Bible, she is also the bearer of the good "health" news which stresses that one can be freed from the chains of sickness and diseases through proper health care. Going beyond race and religion, she founded the Agape Rural-Health Program (ARP). Through ARP, she has shared her knowledge of health care not only to the province of Palawan, but even to other nearby provinces. Because of her expertise in tropical diseases, she has been recognized by the World Health Organization (WHO) and other international institutions, giving her the chance to answer to the same health problems in other tropical countries.

MONICA SISON
Valencia, Negros Oriental, Region VII

TEACHER Category

As a teacher who chose to do her job in Negros Oriental that was once known as the "no man's island," Monica Sison was driven by her will and belief that even the children in that province deserves to have the proper education. She believed that children shouldn't have to travel far just to be educated so she herself would go to these children in need. But not only was Monica Sison a teacher, she was also a mother to all her students. Not limiting herself to education, she also made it her business to provide the children with the basic food and clothing that they needed by asking her friends for donations. She also shared her knowledge on gardening and basic health and home care. Through all of this, many parents who were once part of the NPA decided to go down the mountains and back to their homes just so their children could go to school. She has succeeded in constructing a high school and currently governs the five schools in Negros Oriental.

ROLLY MELENDREZ
Pagadian City

YOUTH Category

As a student, Rolly Melendrez of Pagadian City excels in everything that he does. He either heads or is part of the different projects in school that help other people and other students in his hometown and nearby communities especially to the Muslims. He is also an active youth leader who never tires of encouraging the youth for their participation and leadership in their school. He also helps in preserving their culture and continues to introduce different livelihood programs that have made Muslims in nearby communities prosper and flourish. Despite the hectic schedule, he manages to find time to work and earn money to help out his family.

SR. ELOISA DAVID, OSB
Tacloban, Leyte, Region VIII

SPECIAL Awardee

Sister Eloisa David from Tacloban can be aptly described as the Super Sister. Currently, she has ten projects including the construction of a public hospital, a housing project for the employees in the institution she founded, a skills development program for farmers, among others. Through these projects, she has helped the provincial government of Leyte improve its health services and many more. But do not think that it comes easily for this sister. She is known to be a risk taker and even vowed to be with the "spiritually insane, sick and destitute."

DYNAMIC TEEN COMPANY
Cavite City, Cavite, Region IV-A

INSTITUTION Category

Age has never been as issue when it comes to helping other people. Even as young teenagers, ages 12 to 19, the members of the Dynamic Teen Company of Cavite City have proved that age does not matter. What makes this group even more remarkable is that some of its members were former drug users and criminals but because of the love that they received through the group, these teenagers have fled away from darkness and turned towards helping out other people in need. Some of their projects include teaching the children who live in cemeteries. Due to the lack of formal tables and chairs, they were not discouraged and instead, opted to hold their study groups on top of the graves. They also heal the skin wounds of the children, give them baths, feed them and leave basic necessities like soaps, toothpastes and toothbrushes for the children to use. They put up a hotline to give counsel to the youth who are in need of advice. They also have their annual "gift giving" to children who live in the cemeteries and the squatter areas near the ocean. Where do they get the funds? These teenagers are very industrious and efficient as they have fund raising concerts and collect and sell newspapers, bottles and even ukay-ukay all around Cavite City. The money that they generate through these events is not for their personal use but for the children whose lives they continue to touch.

Bayaning Samahang
Pilipino sa
America

SAN LORENZO RUIZ SPIRITUAL CENTER

(Tidewater, VA)

Communities need leaders who can create a better place to live. Fr. Leo Monalo is one such leader. Filipinos in the Tidewater area had no place to gather and celebrate their religious beliefs and cultural heritage. The best way Fr. Monalo knew to tend his flock was to build a place for this purpose — and the San Lorenzo Ruiz Spiritual Center was born. The center was to be a symbol of the Filipino apostolate of the organization. It was to be here that parish involvement, religious vocations for the youth and the celebration of human diversity would be encouraged. All Filipino immigrants of Tidewater were to gather here in joy or in grief, in song, in dance, to discuss, to mend broken bridges, to serve or be served. And it was to be here, most importantly, that all victims of all kinds of disasters, would find shelter, comfort and solace. Through all the challenges they have faced, the Tidewater community and San Lorenzo Ruiz Spiritual Center stood their ground and held their peace.

Present during the deliberations were *Mr. Alfredo Antonio* as Chair, *Ms. Chit Guerrero, Bong Osorio, Nica Tolentino, Rhobie Ang, Joland Santos, Rosanna Garcia* and *Fr. Nilo Tanalega*. Also present were the UGAT staff *Marinela Mirasol, Frederick Laping* and *Karen Vardeleon*.

They are just some of the heroes that have been found in our midst. More and more silent workers who never expect recognition are now much admired. Through **Gawad Geny Lopez, Jr. Bayaning Pilipino Awards**, their stories are heard, told, and made known to all Filipinos around the world. The people whose lives they've touched are writing about their sacrifices and acts of kindness. They are now part of our country's history, the true Heroes of our Nation.

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Agri losses seen hitting ₱100M mark

By Amy R. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE WAS PROjecting losses to farms and crops brought by Typhoons "Lando" and "Mina" to reach at least P100 million.

A DA official said the department was bracing for huge losses in harvests by the end of the year even as the amount of damages left by the two storms on the agricultural sector has yet to be fully determined.

But as of yesterday, Agriculture Assistant Secretary Salvador Salacup announced that the total amount of damages brought about by the two typhoons has reached P109.7 million.

He said that damage to *palay*, or rice plants, amounted to some P56.8 million; corn, P17.7 million; vegetables, P31.9 million; fisheries, P2.7 million; and livestock, P390,000.

In a separate report to Agriculture Undersecretary Jesus Emmanuel, the DA Central Action Center (DACAC) said that rice losses from tropical storm Lando alone had reached 2,634 metric tons of *palay* worth some P31.66 million.

The DACAC assured however, that these losses account for only about 0.04 percent of the fourth quarter production target, pegged at 6.4 million metric tons.

It added that the storm had inflicted varying degrees of damage to some 1,672 hectares of palay farms in Palawan, Albay, Sorsogon, Iloilo, Cebu, Negros, Misamis Oriental and Surigao del Norte.

More than half of these affected provinces had great chances of recovery, it stressed.

Meanwhile, losses to corn from typhoon Lando is valued at P 17.73 million, damaging 1,974 hectares in Cebu, Negros Oriental, Lanao Norte and Misamis Oriental.

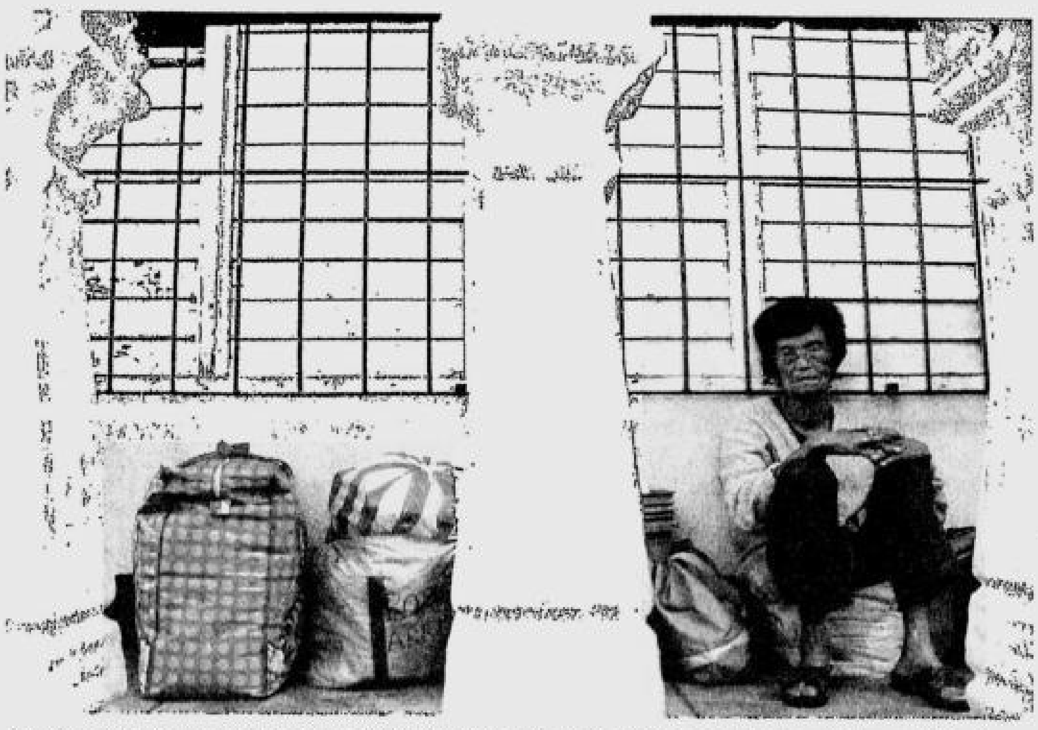
According to the DACAC report, most of the corn areas hit were still in the vegetative stage and thus, losses in corn grains was estimated to be minimal at 31 metric tons.

These "worst-case agricultural losses" projected by DACAC were based on the latest bulletin on Sunday by the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa).

The DA had likewise reiterated its readiness to extend immediate assistance to all farmers and other stakeholders who are reeling from the typhoons.

Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap earlier said that the DA has been monitoring the extent of the typhoon damages since last week, and is preparing to provide aid to farmers and fishermen in these areas.

"I have ordered all affected regional field units to monitor all areas affected and forecast possible damages to areas affected so we can immediately assist the farmers, fisherfolk and other stakeholders," Yap had said.



A RESIDENT of Albay province awaits transportation to an evacuation center when Typhoon "Mina" threatened to strike at the Bicol region, but changed course just as residents were being moved to safer ground.

NIÑO JESUS ORBETA/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

Cases filed vs docs in PhilHealth claims scam

By Nestor P. Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

ILOILO CITY—THE PHILIPPINE Health Insurance Corp. (PhilHealth) has filed administrative cases against four Negros Occidental-based doctors in relation to irregularities in insurance claims for cataract surgeries.

Named respondents were physicians Nonito Avecilla, Miguel Sarabia, Danilo Guanzon and Leopoldo Cuaycong, according to a copy of the PhilHealth complaint obtained by the INQUIRER from a source who asked not to be identified as he had no authority to speak about the case.

The doctors are facing a total of 29 charges for padding claims, misrepresentation and violations of provisions of the PhilHealth warranties of accreditation and Republic Act 7875 (National Health Insurance Act) before the PhilHealth's prosecution department.

Avecilla faces the highest number of cases with 15, followed by Cuaycong (7), Sarabia (6) and Guanzon (1).

All respondents are affiliated with the Bacolod Our Lady of Mercy Specialty Hospital, except for Guanzon who is affiliated with the Bacolod Adventist Medical Center.

The INQUIRER tried to reach Avecilla and Sarabia for comment but repeated calls to their mobile phones were unanswered.

The violations are grounds for the nonrenewal or revocation of accreditation of doctors and hospitals and the imposition of a fine ranging from P10,000 to P50,000. Administrative charges could also be filed before the Professional Regulatory Commission for the cancellation of the professional license of doctors found guilty.

Criminal charges for falsification of documents and estafa could also be filed against the respondents, said lawyer Jay Villegas, manager of the PhilHealth's Fact-Finding and Administrative Investigation Department, in a telephone interview.

'Mina' slows down trading of vegetables

LA TRINIDAD, BENGUET—TYphoon "Mina" did not disrupt vegetable supply at the trading post here but traders said the sale of vegetables could slow down if strong rains would continue for days.

Monday's prices were considered normal although wholesalers from Metro Manila and the provinces were expected not to haul the normal volume of their purchases due to the rains.

Consumers' choice

Agusta Balanoy, Benguet Truckers and Traders Association (BTTA) secretary, said traders often limited the volume of vegetables they bought from farmers here during prolonged rains.

But she said the slowdown was not due to damage caused on roads or farm-to-market roads that could have cut the flow of supply from the farms.

She said the decision to limit their purchases was often attributed to the preference of consumers to buy canned goods from stores instead of going to the market to buy vegetables during typhoons.

Canned over fresh

"The truckers always had the experience that during typhoons and floods, consumers, particularly those in [Metro] Manila, would prefer canned goods over fresh vegetables from the wet market," she said.

As a result, Balanoy said the truckers were forced to limit purchases from the trading post here to deliver only enough supply to Metro Manila.

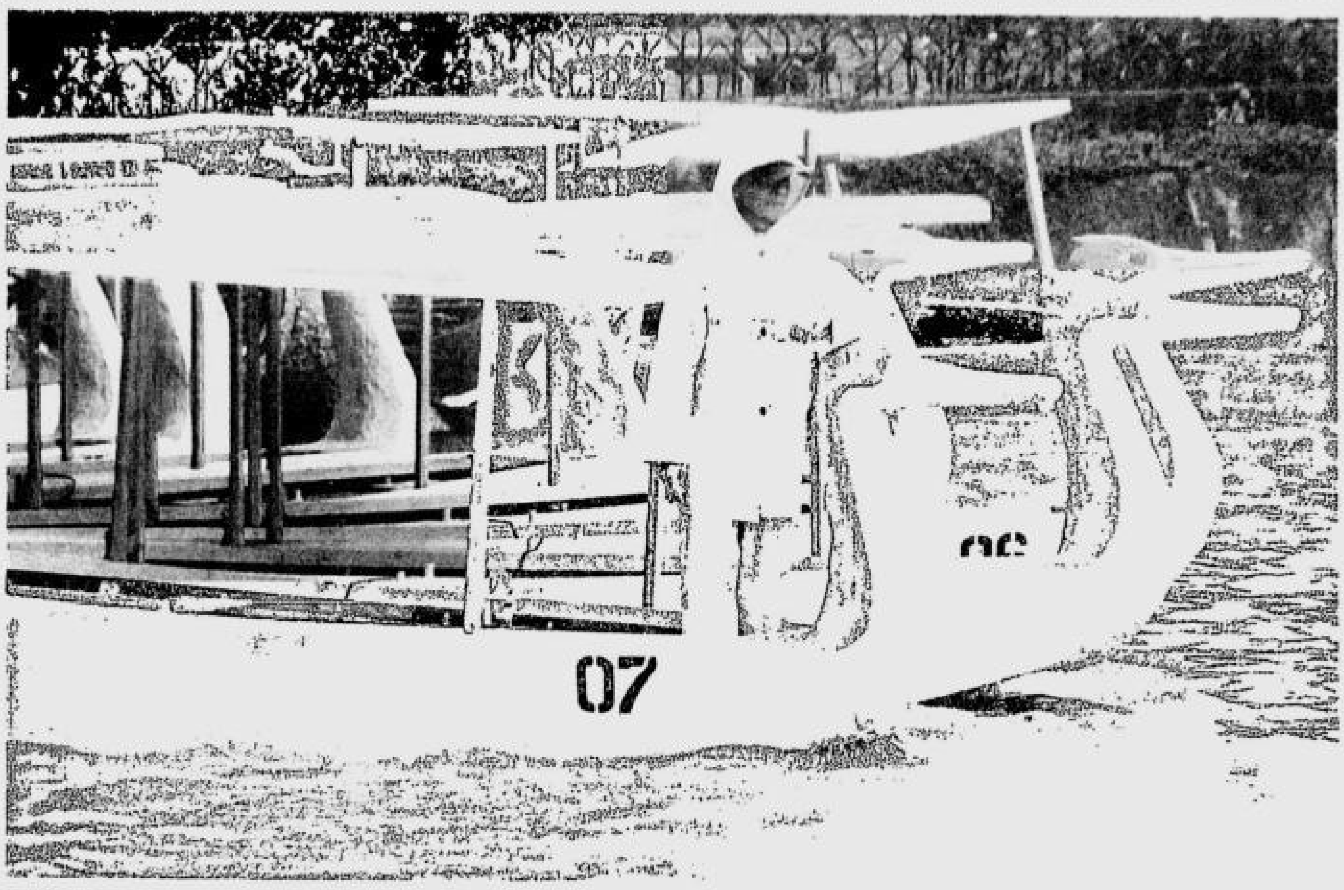
They feared that vegetable retailers would not buy the vegetables they took here, she said.

On Monday, the BTTA said at least 22 trucks hauled vegetables for Divisoria, Manila; 10 for Balintawak, Quezon City; and 10 for other provinces.

Despite the typhoon, vegetable supply would not be a problem, farmers said.

Dominador Dongla, market inspector, said farmers were still upbeat over Monday's prices.

The wholesale prices of vegetables as of Monday were beans (P40 a kilogram), cucumber (P28), green pepper (P140), red pepper (P190), cabbage (P15 to P17), Chinese pechay (P15), cauliflower (P65 to P70), potatoes (P30), radish (P11), and garden pea (P110). *Delmar Cariño, Inquirer Northern Luzon*



PAINT JOB

EV ESPIRITU/INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

Baguio began sprucing up for Christmas when the threat of three converging storms stymied their efforts this week. These boat men were painting their boats at Burnham Lake and had to stop when Mina's strong rains struck on Sunday evening.

Drunken man kills in-law, wife, daughter in Cavite town

TRECE MARTIRES CITY—A drunken man hacked to death his pregnant wife, his mother-in-law and his 8-year-old daughter in Tanza, Cavite on Sunday, police said yesterday.

Two other daughters of Cecilio Mangalino, 45, are still in critical condition at a local hospital in this city.

Supt. Randolf Tuaño, Tanza police chief, identified the slain as Luz Madriaga, 50, Mangalino's mother-in-law; his wife Prulinda, 37; and their daughter Carolina.

He said Prulinda was one-month pregnant.

The couple's daughters Crissamae, 3, and Cassilyn, 12, survived the ordeal and are now being treated at the General Emilio Aguinaldo General Hospital for deep hack wounds.

Police are now hunting Mangalino who fled after the attacks.

Tuaño said Mangalino had just come from a liquor party when he and his wife argued inside their house in Barangay Biga at around 11 p.m.

Moments later, the suspect got hold of an ice pick and repeatedly stabbed the victims who were already asleep.

Crissamae screamed for help which caught the attention of their neighbors.

A neighbor saw Mangalino fleeing the house with a blood-stained shirt.

The attack was the second in Cavite in just five days.

Last Wednesday, victim Ellen Romerosa, 18, and her daughters Angelyn Orogo, 2, and Marlyn Orogo, 1, were hacked to death in their hut in Barangay Mahabang Kahoy Cerca, Indang town.

Suspects Reynaldo Rondina and Larry de Lara have been arrested. *Marlon Ramos, Inquirer Southern Luzon*

DENR asked again to stop Sierra Madre logging

LUCENA CITY—A GROUP OPposed to continued logging in Sierra Madre renewed a call for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to cancel a 25-year timber license that allows the cutting of trees in the mountain range.

The Task Force Sierra Madre (TFSM), a group of local officials, religious leaders, tribal folk and nongovernment organizations, asked Environment Secretary Joselito Atienza to use its police power to stop logging in the already balding mountain range.

In a letter to Atienza, the TFSM said the DENR itself has already acknowledged the destruction brought by deforestation in the Sierra Madre in the form of floods and landslides that left hundreds in Quezon and Aurora provinces dead in 2004.

"The act of the state through the DENR of canceling or suspending all logging and logging permits was in the exercise of police power which is superior to the sanctity of contracts, to assert the right of the state and of the people to self-protection and self-preservation," the group said.

The Integrated Forestry Management Agreement (IFMA), or timber license, covers more than 36,000 hectares in Sierra Madre and was granted to Timberland Forest Products Inc. (TFPI), owned by Bulacan-based logger Wilson Ng, on Nov. 12, 2002 by then Environment Secretary Heherson Alvarez.

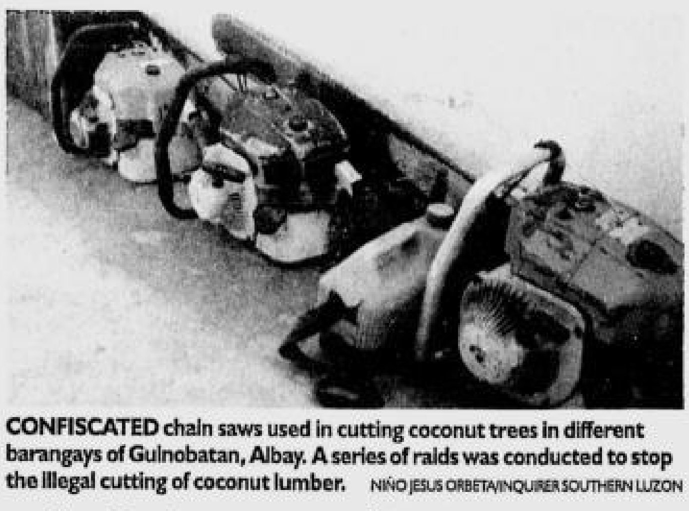
Alvarez's successor, Elisea Gozun, revoked the IFMA on Jan. 13, 2004, saying "fraud, misrepresentation and omission of material facts" surrounded the process by which the DENR granted the contract.

However, the contract was reinstated by the Office of the President on March 4, 2005, ironically four months after the tragic floods and landslides in the three towns of General Nakar, Infanta and Real that left hundreds of people dead and millions of pesos worth of property destroyed.

Malacañang finally approved TFPI's IFMA last year despite protests from residents of northern Quezon.

Ng maintained that his critics had long been opposing him but had never done anything to stop illegal logging.

"What have they done to stop illegal logging in the past 30 years? Nothing," Ng said in an earlier phone interview. *Delfin T. Mallari Jr., Inquirer Southern Luzon*



CONFISCATED chain saws used in cutting coconut trees in different barangays of Guinobatan, Albay. A series of raids was conducted to stop the illegal cutting of coconut lumber. NIÑO JESUS ORBETA/INQUIRER SOUTHERN LUZON

MANOBO RESIDENTS of remote villages of Surigao del Sur start a 15-km trek to flee their communities for fear of getting caught in the crossfire between government soldiers and communist guerrillas.

PHOTO FROM KARAPATAN-SURIGAO DEL SUR

Manobos flee homes for fear of clashes

BUTUAN CITY—MORE THAN 200 LUMAD families have fled their homes in at least 12 hinterland villages of Surigao del Sur since last week as soldiers arrived in their communities in pursuit of communist rebels, the human rights group Karapatan said.

The military confirmed the operation saying New People's Army rebels, who ambushed and wounded two soldiers who were bringing medicines to some lumad communities on Wednesday, use the villages as camps.

Flight

Rev. Fr. Modesto Villasanta, Karapatan chair for Surigao del Sur, said 1,512 persons, mostly women and children, ignored the heavy rains to avoid the military operations at the border of Lianga and San Agustin towns.

He said with children in tow and carrying their belongings, the villagers trekked the 15-kilometer road to Lianga town proper.

"This major military build up has created a humanitarian crisis and the operation must be stopped," Villasanta said.

Violations

The displaced civilians were taking refuge in various evacuation centers set up by Karapatan, he said.

"The military presence violates the residents' sense of security and safety. The villages were cordoned off, economic activities were limited and residents monitored by the military," Villasanta said.

He also said soldiers have threatened villagers and accused them of being NPA supporters.

But Col. Jose Vizcarra, commander of the Army's 401st Infantry Brigade, said contrary to Villasanta's claims, his men actually occupied NPA camps and not civilian areas.

Villasanta said aside from occupying civilian houses, soldiers also interrogated children inside lumad literacy schools in the said villages.

Propaganda

"That's pure propaganda. The Karapatan and Communist Party of the Philippines is one, they have done nothing good to the Filipino people but violence and lies," he said.

Vizcarra also rejected calls for a stop to the operation, saying the military will continue to pursue the rebels in the area, commonly known as the Andap Valley complex.

"The operations against the rebels will continue until necessary," he said.

Vizcarra labeled the Andap Valley complex as host to the NPA's main base in the province and a training ground for NPA recruits. *Franklin Caliguid and Chris Panganiban, Inquirer Mindanao*

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GOLD STANDARDS IN UROLOGY

MALACANANG PALACE
Manila
Message

Warmest felicitations to the men and women of the Philippine Urological Association, Inc. as you hold your 50th Annual Meeting and Golden Anniversary Celebrations.

Celebrating your golden anniversary with expanded outreach surgical missions and lay forum shows your organization's continuing commitment to uplift the quality of public healthcare, particular in the practice of urology.

Likewise, with the 7th Asia Pacific Society of Uro-Oncology Congress, the 5th Philippine Society of Uro-Oncologists and the 15th Federation of ASEAN Urological Associations Meeting, your members will learn and adopt new technologies and scientific breakthroughs in the treatment of urological disorders in our country today.

May you continue to be our partner in providing our people more access to affordable yet quality healthcare. Carry on the good work.

Mabuhay kayong lahat!

GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
President
Republic of the Philippines

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
Republic of the Philippines
Message

The Department of Health (DOH) extends its warmest greetings to the officers and members of the Philippine Urological Association, Inc. (PUA) on their golden anniversary and holding of the Annual Convention.

I commend the PUA as they continue promoting health awareness and reducing urological disorders through the promotion of health habits which aims to uplift the Filipino's quality of life. May you sustain your relentless efforts to be of selfless service to our countrymen by providing the best measures by which we can achieve better health for all.

May you continuously aspire for excellence and high standards for the benefits of our people.

Congratulations and mabuhay kayong lahat!

FRANCISCO T. DUQUE, III, M.D., M.Sc.
Secretary of Health

PHILIPPINE UROLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, INC.
Message

The Organizing Committee of the 7th Asia Pacific Society of Uro-Oncology Congress, in conjunction with the 15th Federation of ASEAN Urological Associations Meeting and the 50th Philippine Urological Association Annual Convention, to be held in Manila, Philippines on November 27-December 1, 2007, wishes to invite you all to attend this eventful meeting in our beloved country.

We aim to facilitate the flow of the information in Urology, particularly Uro-Oncology, with the end of improving patient care in the Asia Pacific region.

Please expect State-of-the-Art Lectures, Point-Counterpoint Debates, Panel Discussions by an International Faculty of experts to stimulate your interest. You will surely fondly remember the social activities too.

With the Philippines known for its hospitality and the fortunate timing of the meeting within our long Christmas celebration, guests will experience this distinct festive season. We also take pride in a rich cultural heritage and culinary expertise. One will miss our native cuisine, once tasted.

Metro-Manila is also a destination for entertainment with an array of night-time activities. There is also a good number of exquisite spots in the more than 7000 islands for the adventurous.

We are very confident to live up your expectations. See you all in Manila!

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APSUO 2007

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Day to day program
Isla Ballroom

Pre-convention Symposia
November 28, 2007, Wednesday

0800-100	Breakout Session: APSUO Clinical Practice Guidelines for Renal Cell Carcinoma Dr. Narmada Gupta (Faculty: Dr. David Crawford & Dr. Frans Debruyne)
1000-1200	Breakout Session: APSUO Clinical Practice Guidelines for Bladder Carcinoma Dr. E. Kesavan (Faculty: Dr. James Eastham & Dr. Frans Debruyne)
1200-1400	LUNCH SYMPOSIUM Oncura and Galil Medical Minimally invasive Management options in urology oncology
1400-1500	Breakout Session: APSUO Clinical Practice Guidelines for Prostate Cancer Early Detection Dr. Jason L. Letran (Faculty: Dr. David Crawford)
1500-1615	Breakout Session: APSUO Clinical Practice Guidelines for Prostate CancerLocalized/Locally Advanced Dr. Dennis P. Serrano (Faculty: Dr.David Crawford)
1615-1700	Breakout Session: APSUO Clinical Practice Guidelines for Prostate Cancer-Metastatic and Hormone Refractory Dr. Jaime S.D. Songco (Faculty: Dr. Philip Kantoff)

Day to day program
Isla Ballroom

DAY 1
November 29, 2007, Thursday

0800 - 1000	Opening Ceremony
1000 - 1015	Opening of the Exhibits
1015-1045	Updates in Urinary Diversion *Dr. Frans Debruyne*
1045-1130	Updates in Endourology *Dr. Arthur Smith*
1130-1200	Updates in Laparoscopy in Urological Practice *Dr. Ralph Clayman*
1200-1400	LUNCH SYMPOSIUM PFIZER
1400-1415	Trends in Management of Localized Renal Cell Carcinoma *Dr. Ralph Clayman*
1415-1430	The Role of Laparoscopy in Renal Cell Carcinoma *Dr. Ralph Clayman*
1430-1445	The Role of Ablative Modalities in Renal Cell Carcinoma *Dr. Brunolf Lagerveld*
1445-1500	Management of Advanced Renal Cell Carcinoma *Dr. Philip Kantoff*
1500-1530	Panel Discussion: Renal Cell Carcinoma *Panelists: Dr. Ralph Clayman, Dr. Brunolf Lagerveld & Dr. Philip Kantoff*
1530-1600	Updates in Testicular Cancer *Dr. Frans Debruyne*
1600-1615	Role of Chemotherapy in Testicular Cancer *Dr. Philip Kantoff*
1615-1630	Updates in Penile Cancer *Dr. B. Lojanapiwat*
1630-1700	Panel Discussion: Testicular/Penile Cancer *Dr. Frans Debruyne, Dr. Philip Kantoff, Dr. Eduardo Gatchalian & Dr. Krisada Ratana-Olarn*
1800 - 2000	Welcome Cocktails Isla Ballroom
2000-2200	ALUMNI NIGHT

Day to day program
Isla Ballroom

DAY 2
November 30, 2007, Friday

[illegible]	Breakfast Symposium [illegible] Management of Prostate Cancer in the Philippines Advantages of [illegible] *[illegible]*
[illegible]	Highlights of the previous day
[illegible]	Endourology/Laparoscopy *[illegible]*
[illegible]	Renal Cell Carcinoma *Dr. Narmada Gupta*
[illegible]	Testicular/Penile Cancer *[illegible]*
[illegible]	Urothelial Carcinoma: Trends in the Diagnosis and Management *Dr. Frans Debruyne*
[illegible]	Role of Laparoscopy for Urothelial Carcinoma *[illegible]*
[illegible]	Role of Radiotherapy for Urothelial Carcinoma *[illegible]*
[illegible]	Role of Chemotherapy for Urothelial Carcinoma *Dr. Valerie Chan*
[illegible]	Endoscopic Management of Upper Tract Urothelial Carcinoma *Dr. Arthur Smith*
[illegible]	Panel Discussion in Urothelial Carcinoma *[illegible]*
1000-1015	Coffee Break
[illegible]	Prostate Biopsy Strategy *[illegible]*
[illegible]	Trends in the Management of Localized Prostate Cancer *[illegible]*
[illegible]	The Role of Laparoscopy/Robotics in Prostate Cancer *[illegible]*
[illegible]	The Role of Open Surgery [illegible] in the 21st Century *Dr. David Crawford*
[illegible]	The Role of Radiotherapy in Prostate Cancer *[illegible]*
[illegible]	The Role of Cryotherapy *Dr. Bill Lynch*
[illegible]	Lunch Symposium [illegible]
[illegible]	Panel Discussion in Early Prostate Cancer *[illegible]*
[illegible]	Trends in Management of Metastatic Prostate Cancer *[illegible]*
[illegible]	Trends in the Management of Hormone Refractory Prostate Cancer *Dr. Philip Kantoff*
[illegible]	Treatment of the Primary Prostate Cancer in Metastatic Disease *Dr. David Crawford*
[illegible]	Panel Discussion in Advanced Prostate Cancer *[illegible]*
[illegible]	[illegible]
[illegible]	Trends in the Management of Prostate Cancer Across Asia *Dr. Christopher Cheng, Dr. Rohan Malek, Dr. Jason Letran, Dr. C. Leewansangtong, Dr. Vu Le Chuyen, Dr. [illegible] Kulkarni*
	Free Paper and Poster Session
1900-2100	PUA-Pfizer Research Essay Contest Induction of PSU Diplomates

Day to day program
Isla Ballroom

DAY 3
December 1, 2007, Saturday

0600-0730	Breakfast Symposium SANOFI AVENTIS Moving beyond conventional BPH Management *Dr. Lester A. Garcia & Dr. Dennis P. Serrano*
0730-0800	Highlights of the previous day
0730-0740	Urothelial Cancer *Prof. Akmal Tahir*
0740-0750	Localized/Locally Advanced Prostate Carcinoma *Dr. Mark [illegible]*
0750-0800	Metastatic Hormone Refractory Prostate Cancer *Dr. Rohan Malek*
0800-0830	Updates in Pediatric Tumors *Dr. Michael Gaston*
0830-0930	The Incidence of GU Tumors across Asia *Dr. Krisada Ratana-Olarn, Prof. Akmal Tahir, Prof. Christopher Cheng, Dr. Rohan Malek & Dr Carmela M. Lapitan*
0930-1000	Setting up an Ideal GU Oncology Unit *Dr. Christopher Cheng*
1000-1015	COFFEE BREAK
1015-1045	Radiotherapy 101 for Urologists *Dr. Miriam Joy Calaguas*
1045-1115	Chemotherapy 101 for Urologists *Dr. Valerie Chan*
1115-1130	Presentation of the Clinical Practice Guidelines in Renal Cancer *Dr. Narmada Gupta*
1130-1145	Presentation of the Clinical Practice Guidelines in Bladder Cancer *Dr. E. Kesavan*
1145-1200	Presentation of the Clinical Practice Guidelines in Prostate Cancer *Dr. Jason L. Letran*
1200-1400	LUNCH SYMPOSIUM Novartis Health Care Zones
1400-1500	Take Home Messages
1400-1410	Endourology/Laparoscopy *Dr. Vu Le Chuyen*
1410-1420	Renal Cell Carcinoma *Dr. Federico [illegible]*
1420-1430	Penile/Testicular Cancer Dr. Krisada Ratana-Olarn
1430-1440	Urothelial Cancer Prof. Akmal Tahir
1440-1450	Localized, Locally Advanced Prostate Cancer *Dr. Rohan Malek*
1450-1500	Prostate Cancer-Metastatic and Hormone Refractory Dr. Krisada Ratana-Olarn
1500-1700	PUA Business Meeting Election of Officers PSU Elections
19:00-2400	Fellowship Night

PHILIPPINE UROLOGICAL ASSOCIATION, INC.
Message

The Philippine Urological Association, Inc. had been envisioned by our founding fathers to further the art and science of Urology and bring the benefits of our practice to the Filipino people. Over the years, the PUA had stood by that vow and had grown in breadth and reach, to cover almost all the regions of the country in its efforts to provide urologic service to the, now, more than 82 million Filipinos.

2007 had been declared by the President of the Republic of the Philippines, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo as the "Year of the Filipino Urologist" by virtue of Presidential Proclamation No 1218. This is an attestation to the development and improvement of the surgical discipline of Urology and of the urological commitment to bring such knowledge and advancement of our craft for the betterment of our brethren. The PUA also celebrates a milestone of 50 years of growth in technology and an increase in the knowledge that have benefited our urologists. Even in Asia, The Filipino urologists are never far from delivering 1st world care and cure to their patients.

Today, the PUA stands before the dawn of another 50 years and her successes tomorrow will depend on her members, their passion for their vocation and their love for the organization. The collective and intuitive commitment for an organization, that will be run by various personalities with differing institutional loyalties in the years to come, will be the "tie that will bind" all the urologists and see to it that the PUA will live on.

In behalf of the 2007 PUA Executive Council, I welcome you to this 50th Anniversary Annual Convention and as 2007 draws to a close, the members of the Executive Council would like to thank every urologist who had contributed to making this year and the past 50 years, a successful one of the PUA.

JULIANO Z.K. PANGANIBAN, M.D.
President
2007 Executive Council
Philippine Urological Association, Inc.
1957-2007

PHILIPPINE SOCIETY OF URO-ONCOLOGISTS
Message

Warm greetings and welcome to all the delegates and participants of triple celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the PUA, Inc (Philippine Urological Association, Inc.); the FAUA (Federation of ASEAN Urological Associations) and the APSUO (Asia Pacific Society of Uro-Oncology) conference from the Philippine Urological Association, Inc. and the Philippine Society of Urologic Oncologists, Inc.

Being one of the convenors of this meeting, I am very confident and sure that you will find the scientific program very exciting and stimulating. We have carefully planned to invite only the best speakers and lecturers who are experts and who's who in their field of expertise in urology. They will definitely update us on what is new in their field of sub-specialization.

The overwhelming support of our colleagues and friends from the Asia Pacific Region to participate and share their expertise and experiences will open our eyes and minds to the best solutions in diagnosing and treating urologic diseases that we have in common in our region.

Beautiful places abound in the Philippines and these places are worth seeing.
I therefore encourage each and everyone of you to spend extra days to visit these places. We have provided you with a travel and tour agency to help you plan your trip and itinerary.

To the organizing committee, I salute you for your efforts and sacrifices in coming out with a program to make this triple celebration be successful and mutually enjoyable educational experience for all.

Mabuhay and God Bless!

REYNALDO C. DELA CRUZ, MD
President, Phil. Society of Uro-Oncologists
Co-Chairman Organizing Committee

FEDERATION OF ASEAN UROLOGICAL ASSOCIATIONS
Message

Colleagues, friends and distinguished guests, it is of great pride that I welcome you to the 7th Asia-Pacific Society of Uro-Oncology, 15th Federation of ASEAN Urological Association (FAUA) and the 50th Philippine Urological Association, Inc. Annual Meeting and Golden Anniversary celebrations. This con-celebration banners an impressive lineup of international expert who will tackle the current trends and controversies in the management of urologic cancers. All eyes will definitely be trained on this island paradise to witness this landmark activity.

I also encourage everyone to take advantage of this Golden opportunity to make the most of this distinguished speakers visit. Urologists would go far and wide to catch up with these men. Now, they are coming to talk to us. This is our chance to hear them out and asked them for prized opinions.

And as you satisfy you queries, take time to enjoy our 1,7007 island. Bathe in the sun and smiles that will surely embrace you as you step into this Pearl of the Orient Seas.

JESUS BENJAMIN L. MENDOZA, MD
Secretary General
Federation of ASEAN Urological Associations
Co-Chair, Organizing Committee

ASIA PACIFIC SOCIETY OF URO-ONCOLOGY
Message

The Asia Pacific Society of Uro-Oncology is happy to participate in the 50th Philippine Urological Association Annual Convention and Golden Anniversary Celebrations. This will be our 7th Congress and the society is quickly gaining recognition internationally. Since its humble beginnings in 2000 with the consensus conference in Uro-oncology, it has now spawned many national Uro-oncology societies and APSUO is a member society of the World Federation of Uro-Oncology.

The society aims to improve the care of the uro-oncology patient by sharing best practices and facilitate research into topics of relevance of out region. Every urologist to a greater or smaller degree deals with uro-oncology on a daily basis. From PSA related issues to complex surgical treatment, the field is one of the most rapidly developing and challenging. Every issue of leading urological journal is overwhelming dominated by oncological papers. Thus, it is safe to say that there is a uro-oncologist in every urologist and everyone should participate in our society's activity. The program in Manila is exciting and well planned, participants will surely benefit much.

Next year the congress will be held in conjunction with 9th Asian Congress in Urology in New Delhi2-5 October 2008, I look forward to seeing you there.

CHRISTOPHER CHENG, M.D.
President
Asia Pacific Society of Uro-Oncology

Lawmakers to grill Teves, Ibazeta over power assets

From page A1

International Container Terminal Services Inc. (ICTSI) and is one of the bidders for the prized transmission grid and lines of National Power Corp.

Teves will be asked to explain why he approved the sale of majority control in Philippine National Oil Co.-Energy Development Corp. (PNOC-EDC) in defiance of the law and the JCPC that required that it should be sold as several packages of generating plants with steam sales agreements.

"These are two hot officials who will have to come to the Senate on Dec. 13," said Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago, JCPC chair.

While she was clear that Teves went against the 2001 Electric Power Industry Act (Epira) and that he ignored the authority of the JCPC, Santiago was giving Ibazeta the benefit of the doubt on whether he had already cut ties with Razon.

The JCPC has given Ibazeta up to a week to explain allegations of conflict of interest raised by Senators Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and Jamby Madrigal. *(See related story on this page.)*

Disgruntled bidders

"There is a violation of law when the person who is supposed to sign or approve the contract himself, or through a board, group, or a panel of the government, might have a financial, material, or pecuniary interest," Santiago said.

"But there is a defense on the part of Mr. Ibazeta if he can show that pursuant to law he divested himself of any interest in the Razon corporations, then there is no violation of law," she said.

Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile concurred with Santiago. "So what if you are a former board member of a corporation? They have to show there was undue benefit given to the winning bidder simply because he was just an employee of a corporation," said Enrile.

But Pimentel said that Ibazeta should inhibit himself considering that the Transco bidding was set for Dec. 12, or a day before his scheduled appearance.

"We should act within the week that he (Ibazeta) should inhibit himself. But inhibition is a voluntary act, it cannot be imposed, it is a matter of moral values that will come to play. The bidding will be clouded with his participation," said Pimentel.

Santiago pointed out that Ibazeta's critics were "disgruntled bidders who did not make the cut," referring to the group of nickel miner Salvador Zamora II and former Finance Secretary Roberto de Ocampo who filed a court case against Ibazeta after PSALM rejected their application.

Prequalification

"When there's a public bidding, there is a prequalification process. You weed out those who are qualified and those who are not. And these two objectors, who belong to the failed bidders, are not exactly strangers to the power game in Manila," Santiago said, pointing out that Zamora is a brother of an opposition congressman.

"The person is given a chance to prove that there is no such conflict because he either resigned or he divested himself," she said.

Santiago said conflict of interest would not immediately nullify the results of the Dec. 12 bid.

"We spent a lot of time going over three bidding processes, all of which were declared failures, mostly for the reason that there was only one successful pre-qualified bidder. Pursuant to the philosophy of Epira, which is to sell all assets concerning the power industry to private owners, we want to sell at a good market price the Transco. But we want to make sure that the sale is pursuant to the Epira," she said.

Ibazeta: No foul play in proceedings

By Abigail L. Ho

JOSE IBAZETA, PRESIDENT of Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (PSALM), yesterday dismissed accusations of irregularities in the bidding for the assets of National Transmission Corp. (Transco).

Finally breaking his silence on the multibillion-dollar controversy, Ibazeta said the bidding process had been transparent from the very start, with all potential investors treated equally and told exactly what to expect.

"We know there was no foul play in the proceedings. The bidding procedures were clear, made known to all the prospective bidders, and applied equally to all of them," he said in a statement.

Ibazeta, however, did not address the issue of conflict of interest raised by opposition Senators Aquilino Pimentel Jr. and Jamby Madrigal.

Malacañang declined to comment on this issue or the involvement of businessman Enrique Razon, treasurer of the administration coalition Team Unity in the May senatorial elections.

Press Secretary Ignacio Bunye, Executive Secretary Eduardo Ermita and Presidential Management Staff chief Cerge Remonde referred the INQUIRER instead to Ibazeta when they were asked about the Transco deal.

In his statement, Ibazeta said that "the procedures even give the bidders an opportunity to ask for a reconsideration of any decision on prequalification, to ensure that there is no abuse of discretion in PSALM's evaluation of the bidders' submissions."

He explained that at the prequalification stage, all documents submitted by would-be bidders were evaluated by technical working groups, whose assessment was then reevaluated by a review committee.

The review committee then made a recommendation to the PSALM board, which is composed of the secretaries of the departments of finance, energy, trade and industry and budget management, as well as the director general of the National Economic and Development Authority.

"Only those who passed the prequalification criteria were allowed to proceed with the bidding process. This is not favoring any party; this is merely complying with the strict requirements for the Transco operator as stated in the bidding procedures and the Epira (Electric Power Industry Reform Act of 2001)," Ibazeta said.

"The PSALM board makes the final decision; no single person dictates or controls the decision on prequalification," Ibazeta said.

One of the bidders who did not make the list of the final four prequalified bidders—the La Costa consortium headed by former Finance Secretary Roberto de Ocampo and businessman Salvador Zamora II—had filed a case against PSALM and Ibazeta on charges of irregularities.

Since the case was still in court, Ibazeta declined to comment on the merits of the case, saying only that "no amount of public statements can change the fact that an entity which fails to comply with clear criteria must be disqualified." *With a report from Christine O. Avendaño*

Raising super bright kids 'enjoyable, humbling'

From page A1

be glad that I have these kids, which I am," Cecile says in an interview in their home in Dasmariñas Village, Makati City.

The multi-gifted Cy (pronounced psy) drew public attention when at age 8 he wrote the lyrics and libretto for the musical "The Magic Staff" and appeared in the production when it was staged at the Meralco Theater a year later.

While attending Philippine Science High School in Quezon City, he copiously wrote short stories and novels, and painted abstract forms. He also wrote a musical score for a concert.

Photographic memory

Now a physics freshman at the University of the Philippines, he's into "experimental music," and translates his compositions into stories, drawings and paintings. He is set to launch his own album on the Internet, his mother says.

His brother, Yosh, who started talking when he was 2 months old, devours books (history books are his favorite), and can readily recite names of personalities, events and places in history; he has a photographic memory.

He also started writing a novel more than a year ago. Now in Grade 4 at International Montessori in Forbes Park, Makati City, Yosh is fascinated with the Internet; he is the first Filipino to join the Roblox role-playing gaming site.

The two brothers have appeared in Promil's Gifted Kids TV commercials.

The youngest, Aya, proved to be adept with puzzles and blocks. A first-grader at the same Montessori school, she has shown a keen interest in science and New Age books, according to her mother.

At the bookstore

Cecile shares an anecdote about her two younger children, who, like their eldest brother, have had their share of the limelight, already guesting in TV shows.

"I brought them to PowerBooks at Greenbelt and left them at the children's section, but they protested. Yosh likes history; Aya is into New Age," she says, chuckling.

"When I got back more than an hour later from a meeting, I saw Yosh reading JFK's biography. I asked him if he wanted to buy it. He said no because he was almost through reading it."

Cecile, a graduate of Psychology, Philosophy and Political Science from UP, admits that parenting gifted kids is "enjoyable, but it is not without difficulty."

Realizing that her background on psychology was insufficient, she made extensive researches on gifted children, and corresponded with experts on the matter.

Keen senses

She found out that her children, like other gifted children, have keen senses, and ask a lot of questions about anything under the sun.

"It makes me read more, not only because they're a little advanced, but also because every parent should do this in order to communicate with their kids. I'm humble enough to be the student sometimes," Cecile says.

She realized, however, that she could only do so much since she also runs the operations of the family's trading business full time.

It helped that the couple joined the Philippine Association for the Gifted Inc. (PAG) shortly after Yosh started talking comprehensively when he was two months old, and found support from members, who also have gifted children.

Nurturing the gifted

"It's not a guarantee that if you speak early you're gifted. In his case, it was weird, he spoke too early. That's why I joined the association. I was scared I wouldn't know how to deal with this anymore," Cecile recounts.

PAG, a nonprofit, nonstock organization, was founded in 1994 to help families, child care workers, and institutions identify and nurture gifted children and their needs.

The fourth week of November has been proclaimed "National Week for the Gifted and Talented."

Understanding the gifted child and his needs, and employing the right approach are crucial to his growth and development, otherwise, things could go awry, Cecile notes.

It's in the genes

"It's a very lonely world if you can't find someone to understand you," she says. "If the guidance is not very good, you could turn the gift into something, which could either benefit or harm society."

Their father Koh, an anthropologist, taught himself how to play musical instruments when he was young. He also raced cars and easily memorized numbers.

Cecile believes the children took after them.

"It's in the genes," says Cecile, who also writes articles on parenting, fashion and food for newspapers and magazines, designs and acts, among other interests.

Makati Business Club: Palace not doing enough

From page A1

ments on certain bills.

A senior lawmaker acknowledged that the House of Representatives had failed to act on major pieces of legislation. In a meeting two months ago, House leaders promised businessmen these proposed measures would be passed by the end of the year.

Many distractions

"We were saddled by many distractions," Bacolod City Rep. Monico Puentevella said.

Puentevella cited the House's preoccupation with the impeachment complaint against President Macapagal-Arroyo, the leadership tussle between Speaker Jose de Venecia and Cebu Rep. Pablo Garcia, and the delay in the formation of committees.

The lawmaker said he and his colleagues also had to work on the proposed P1.277-trillion national budget for next year.

"Give us three to six months to get the job done," said Puentevella, a principal author of the House version of the proposed Customs Brokers Act and the proposed Credit Information System Act.

A check with the bills and index section showed that many of the proposed measures on the list of the American and European Chambers of Commerce in the Philippines were still at the committee level.

'Long-hanging fruits'

In a separate interview, however, John D. Forbes, chair of the legislative committee of the American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines (Amcham), said there were some "long-hanging fruits in Congress that were ready to go."

"These would be helpful in enhancing the Philippines' competitiveness and should not take too much time for Congress to pass," Forbes said.

He cited as an example Sen. Edgardo Angara's personal equity and retirement account bill that was passed on second reading earlier this month.

"This would help overseas Filipino workers to save up to P50,000 [tax-free], which could be invested in [the financial markets and other ventures]... We have something similar in the US that works fine, and we hope there could be a counterpart bill filed in the House of Representatives," Forbes said.

"Another is the renewable energy bill, which with the rising of oil prices to historical levels deems urgent, and to which nobody is opposed," he said. "And there is the credit information systems bill, which got almost passed in the last Congress."

Forbes said the Amcham, together with the Joint Foreign Chambers of Commerce of the Philippines, had brought up their legislative concerns in several letters to the leaders of both the Senate and the House.

"We understand the legislative process and that it takes time, but we believe these bills should not take until the last year of the session," Forbes said.

The Cagayan de Oro Chamber of Commerce and Industry supported the position of the American and European businessmen.

"This is indicative of the government's inability to address competitiveness," said Elpie Paras, Oro chamber president. "Congress has been focusing more on political matters rather than on improving business climate and setting the general direction of the economy." *Reports from Ronnel W. Domingo and Christian V. Esguerra in Manila; and Ma. Cecilia Rordiguez, Inquirer Mindanao*

Gov't revives $120-M JDV 'behest' loan case

From page A1

her of De Venecia's failure to repay the loan taken out when he was president of Landoil Resources Corp.

But Sabio declined further comment. He said he would discuss the case in a press conference today.

Devanadera said in a radio interview that she and officials of the Department of Justice would discuss the PCGG recommendation to revive the civil case in the Sandiganbayan against De Venecia.

"It appears from the records submitted by our research and development department that De Venecia and the assignors (his affiliates) in the deed of assignment have not fully complied with their obligations and undertakings," Sabio said in his letter to Devanadera.

The Speaker's lawyer, Raul Lambino, said parties out to sow discord between the House leader and President Macapagal-Arroyo were behind the PCGG move.

"It was clearly politically motivated," Lambino said in a phone interview. "It may have been done by people trying to ingratiate themselves to those in power."

Jay Miguel, PCGG legal services director, said that PCGG officials had been discussing the legal action against Landoil even before the Speaker's son, businessman Jose "Joey" de Venecia III, blew the lid off the $329-million National Broadband Network deal with China's ZTE Corp. to electronically wire the Philippine bureaucracy.

Ministerial duty

Miguel denied that the PCGG's endorsement was a result of Venecia's relationship with Ms Arroyo going sour after the Speaker's son's revelations of overpricing and bribery in the broadband deal that she subsequently scuttled.

"With or without ZTE, the endorsement of the chairman will push through," Miguel said, adding that it was his "ministerial duty."

The younger De Venecia is president of Amsterdam Holdings Inc., the losing bidder in the broadband deal.

The older De Venecia was slapped with a case by the PCGG shortly after the ouster of the late President Ferdinand Marcos in 1986. De Venecia was then the president of Landoil, which he founded, when it took out the loan in the 1970s.

About 45 percent of Landoil's outstanding capital stock belonged to Marcos. The Philippine Export Guaranty backed the foreign currency loan.

In the settlement forged in July 1988, Landoil agreed to repay the loan. The pact, which was signed by Ambrosio Collada, who took over the company after De Venecia quit in 1985, did not assign a deadline.

But the agreement provided that the government could run after the Landoil officials and its affiliates should they fail to comply.

The affiliates were the Philippine Singapore Ports Corp., Asian Water and Sewer Systems Inc. Construction Consortium Inc., Pacific Asia Builders and Developers, Philippine Hospitals and Health Services Inc., and Greater Manila Land Corp.

Surprise move

Lambino also said the PCGG's decision was a surprise to De Venecia's camp.

"With all due respect, we don't think the Palace had anything to do with this," he said.

In contesting the proposed reopening of the case, Lambino said Landoil had surrendered to the government its rights to its collectibles.

These include the proceeds from war damage claims by Landoil, which had construction projects in the Middle East, pending before an international court and which amounts to "hundreds of millions of dollars."

Lambino said that if these amounts had not been collected, it was because of the PCGG's handling of the case.

He also said that as far as he was concerned, the matter about the compromise agreement with Landoil was a "nonissue."

Landoil dealt well with the Philippine government considering that it had voluntarily surrendered Marcos' shares in the company to the PCGG without its issuing a sequestration order as it did with those firms owned by Marcos or his business associates, Lambino said.

"If you look at it, it's one of the early cases resolved by the PCGG because of the voluntary action of Landoil," he said.

Unseen hands

Justice Secretary Raul Gonzalez said that some "unseen hands" could be working to oust the Speaker.

"The Speaker does not lack enemies," Gonzalez said.

"The problem actually is even an innocent action can be given meaning. So I don't know why it came out all of a sudden. But maybe it's also because the entire PCGG process is under review by me," he said. *With reports from Christian V. Esguerra, Norman Bordadora*

AN APPEAL TO PRESIDENT GLORIA M. ARROYO

27 November 2007

HER EXCELLENCY GLORIA MACAPAGAL-ARROYO
President, Republic of the Philippines
Malacañang Palace, Manila

Madam President:

Greetings and best wishes from **Subic Bay Freeport Zone!**

On behalf of 41 **Used-Motor Vehicle Importers** inside Subic Bay Freeport Zone, we would like to appeal for your compassion and sense of fairness regarding the implementation of **Executive Order 156**, which has been reaffirmed by the Supreme Court recently.

While we thoroughly agree with your vision of strengthening the Local Industries, we would like to humbly point out that the Used-Motor Vehicle remanufacturing industry in Subic Bay Freeport has also made a significant contribution to the local economy in terms of:

- Payment of Custom Duties and B.I.R. Taxes
- Payment of Subic seaport charges
- Employment of Blue collar workers from Zambales, Bataan, Pampanga, Tarlac and nearby provinces
- Support small suppliers of Spare Parts, Vehicle Accessories, Car Paints and other items in Olongapo and nearby areas.

At present, our industry employs around **2,500 Workers** inside Subic Freeport such as: **MECHANICS, WELDERS, ELECTRICIANS, TRUCK BODY BUILDERS, TINSMITH, CAR PAINTERS and other laborers/helpers.**

Our Group is selling only the following:

1. **Utility Wagons:** Price Range is from **Php 180,000.00 to Php 400,000.00**
2. **Passenger Vans, 7- to 14-Seaters:** Price Range is from Php **150,000.00 to 350,000.00**

- **All of our Vehicles are paid with TAXES & DUTIES as per Assessment of BOC/BIR.**
- **All of our Vehicles have passed thru "Vehicle Testing Centers" regarding Smoke Emission (Clean Air Act) and Roadworthiness prior to LTO Registration.**
- **We are not competitors of Brand-new Vehicles, made locally or imported from Japan, Thailand, Indonesia, China, USA, Germany & other Industrialized Countries.**
- **Vehicles Market Data and LTO Registration should show that we are serving only a small market segment.**

Our Buyers are:

1. **Small Traders & Merchants from the Countryside**
2. **OFW Families & Relatives who saved 1-2 years of their Salaries to have their first car for the whole Family**
3. **Businessmen from small Towns & Cities who have no credit facility from Banks**
4. **LGUs who cannot afford to buy BRAND-NEW yet have to deliver basic services to their Constituents**

After all, who does not want to have brand new vehicles? Unfortunately, not everybody have enough money!

As published in **Manila Bulletin dated Nov. 19, 2007, EASTERN SAMAR GOV. BEN EVARDONE**, also the spokesman of **Union of Local Authorities of the Philippines (ULAP)** and **Secretary-General of League of Provinces of the Philippines (LPP)** have also appealed for your good graces to spare LGUs, & small/medium enterprises from the importation ban upon implementation of E.O. 156.

"As Gov. Evardone had pointed out, the cheap second-hand motor vehicles are efficiently being put to good use as Ambulances, Patrol Cars, Garbage Collectors, Haulers of farm products and other much-needed community services. Banning the importation and sale of these second-hand vehicles would severely hinder the delivery of basic services to the farming sector and would hurt small businesses."

Likewise, **MR. CONRADO BANAL III** have similar opinion and had an interesting column titled **"Walk before you rain" published last May 28, 2005, page B2, Philippine Daily Inquirer.**

Madam President, Please amend EO 156.
Please do not allow our Industry to die!!!

Yes, we agree and support total ban on importation of Luxury Vehicles!!!
(BOC knows those Models & Types)

Yes, we agree that all Smugglers & their cohorts should be punished and put inside the jail!!!

Meantime, please allow SBMA, BOC, BIR & LTO to process all Documents required for all 2,900 imported vehicles that are already inside the Subic Freeport to be sold to the Filipinos. **Around 2,800 of which are NOT Luxury Vehicles and being sold only at Php 150,000.00 to Php 350,000.00.**

Otherwise, majority of our Workers and their Families will not have food in their table this Christmas!

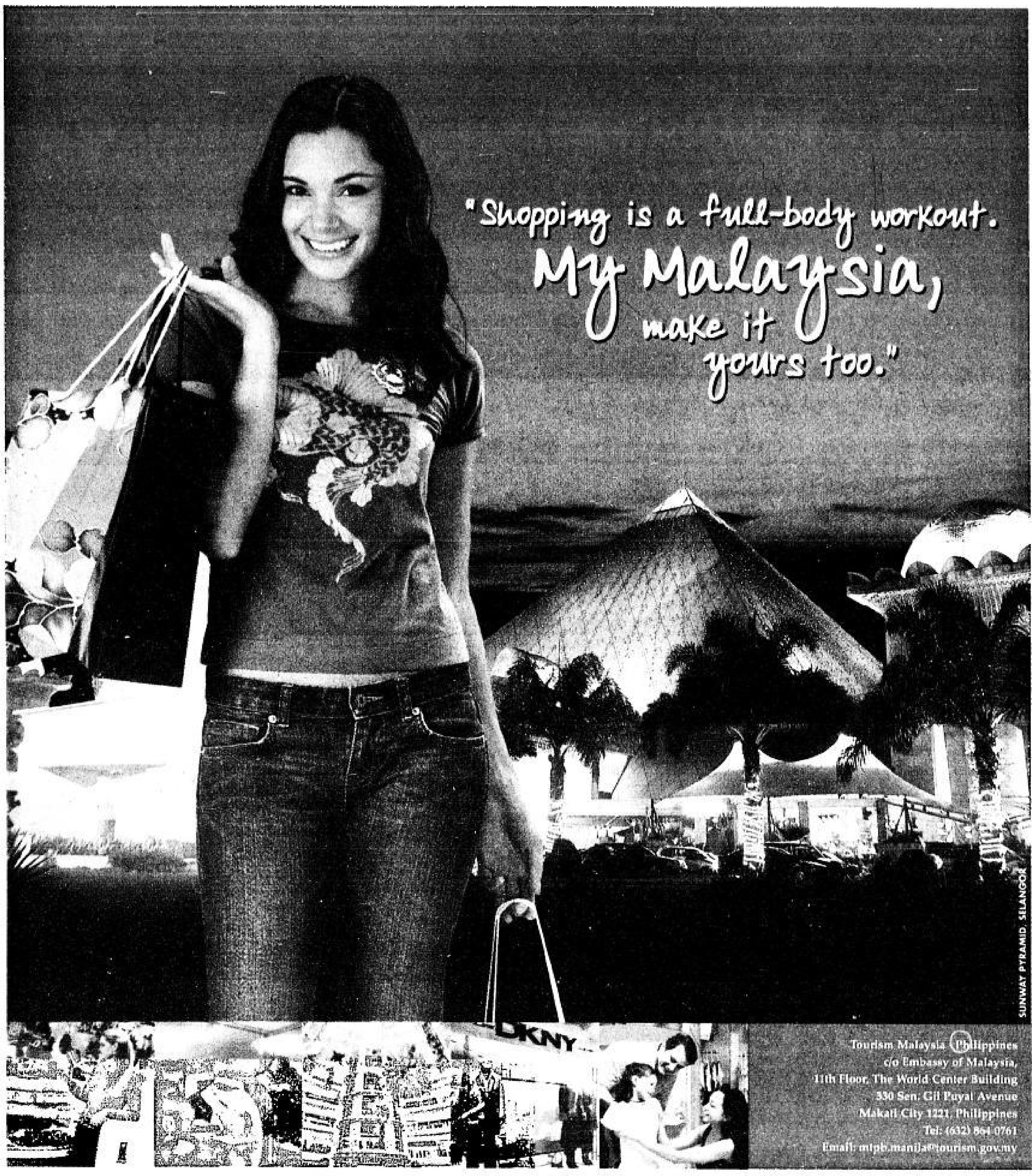
While we were prevailed upon by SBMA Executives not to have Motorcades and Rallies during the "Ad Congress" here in Subic from November 21 to 24, 2007, we may not be able to prevent our Workers and their Families to have their **Motorcade from Subic Bay Freeport up to the House of Representatives** to air our predicament.

In behalf of our 2,500 Workers and their Families, small Merchants, Traders, and OFW Families whose livelihood and small luxury in life are derived from imported used vehicles, we thank you in advance for your consideration in extending the life of our business.

Sincerely yours,

SUBIC BAY MOTORS CORPORATION
DCB INT'L TRADING
EMS CORPORATION
S.A.H. PLATINUM INT'L TRADING INC.
AKRAM INT'L TRADING INC.
HAJMIN INT'L TRADING INC.
RED BARON & BLUE RIDGE ONE TRADING
SUBIC SHONAN INT'L TRADING INC.
MMH INT'L GLINTS INC.
ISSENMAN TRADING CORP.
PHIL-PAN SUBIC VENTURES INC.
SUBIC INT'L BOMBARDIER TRADING CORP.
LUCKY DALE SUBIC INT'L TRADING
AVIVA IMPORT-EXPORT CORP.

Note: We are 41 Registered Vehicle Importers in Subic Bay Freeport Zone. Other companies are not available for signature at short notice.



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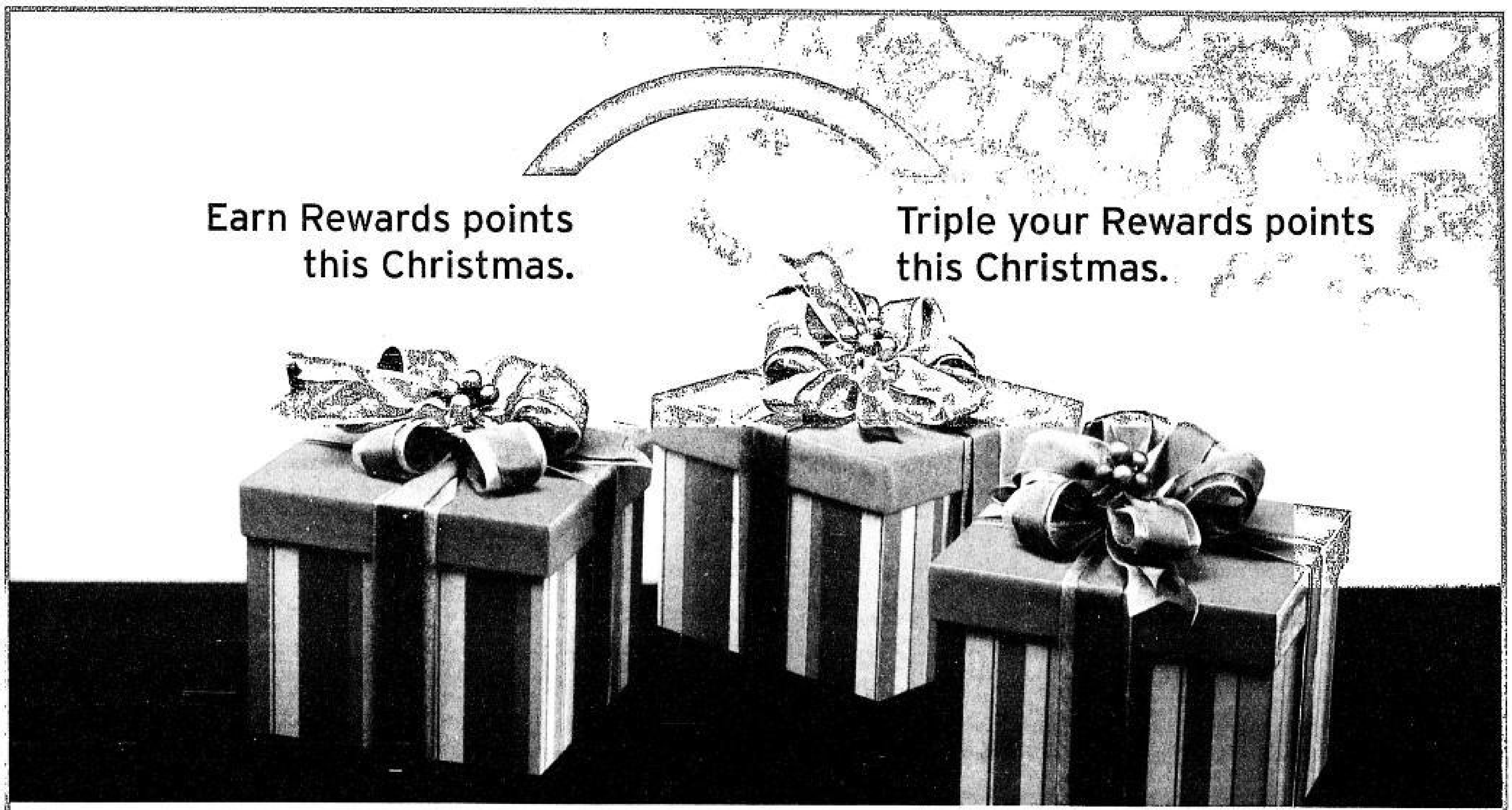

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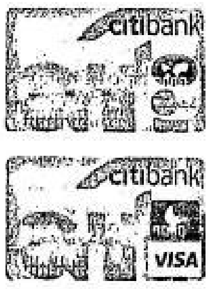

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DID YOU KNOW

TODAY, Nov. 27, is the 75th birth anniversary of Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino Jr., after whom an airport in Pasay City is named. The Manila International Airport was renamed Ninoy Aquino International Airport on Aug. 17, 1987 in honor of the former senator who was assassinated as he was getting off an airplane on Aug. 21, 1983.

Cyril L. Bonabente, Inquirer Research

Pasay youth leaders want SK polls voided

By Julie M. Aurelio

SEVERAL YOUTH LEADERS IN Pasay City have asked the court to declare as "null and void" the Sangguniang Kabataan Federation elections held last Nov. 11 as they accused Mayor Wenceslao "Peewee" Trinidad of manipulating the results in his son's favor.

In a 25-page petition filed at the sala of Judge Edwin Ramiso of the Pasay City Regional Trial Court Branch 114 last week, the SK chairs pointed out that since they have yet to assume office on Nov. 30, they have no legal capacity to elect or be elected as officers of the city's SK Federation.

Named as respondents in the complaint were Jon Trinidad, the mayor's son who was elected president of the federation and the six other SK chairs who were elected to other posts.

The petitioners were Denise Erika Pesebre, Barangay 195 SK chair; Raphael Erena of Barangay 108 and Kriezel Ramos of Brgy 189.

They also asked the court to stop the younger Trinidad and the other officers from assuming office.

Sought for comment, Mayor Trinidad said, "I would rather not comment on the merits of the complaint. That would be sub judice. I will wait for the court to decide."

However, he denied allegations that he had orchestrated the federation elections to favor his son, pointing out that Jon was elected by 169 out of the 201 SK chairs who participated in the Nov. 11 polls.

"My son's campaign was conducted very well … I don't manipulate … How could you manipulate children?" the mayor told the INQUIRER.

Jon was elected SK chairman of Barangay 88 in the Oct. 29 synchronized barangay and SK elections.

The complainants said that the mayor had invited them to attend their oath-taking on Nov. 11 at the City Hall conference room.

"Acting as if he was the campaign manager of his son, the mayor sent letters to SK chairmen of Pasay City. But in reality, he was enticing the chairmen to support the candidacy of his son (for SK Federation president)," they added.

After the oath-taking ceremony, the petitioners said Trinidad announced that the SK Federation would hold its election of officers and that a resolution convening a general assembly had been signed by the majority.

The complainants, however, said that the federation elections should be supervised by representatives of the Department of Interior and Local Government.

They added that the DILG had scheduled the synchronized elections for the SK Federation officers on Dec. 6, and not on Nov. 11.

Famas gives major awards to 'Kasal'

By Marinel R. Cruz

DIRECTOR JOSE JAVIER Reyes' "Kasal, Kasali, Kasalo," a romantic-comedy that tackled the highs and lows of a married couple, won top honors during the 55th Filipino Academy of Movie Arts and Sciences (Famas) awards show held last Sunday.

"Kasal, Kasali, Kasalo" or "KKK" won in nine of the 18 categories it was nominated, including the Best Picture award for its producer, Star Cinema, while Reyes was named Best Director.

Reyes also took home two more awards for KKK—Best Story and Best Screenplay.

The movie's lead actress, Judy Ann Santos, won as Best Actress, beating veteran actress Gina Pareño ("Kubrador"), Maricel Soriano ("Inang Yaya"), Cherrie Pie Picache ("Kaleldo") and Claudine Barretto ("Sukob").

GINA PAREÑO: Best Supporting Actress
RODEL ROTONI

Pareño, however, won the Best Supporting Actress award for her role as Santos' sympathetic mother in "KKK."

Cesar Montano was named Best Actor for his performance in the psychological thriller, "Ligalig," while the Best Supporting Actor award went to Allen Dizon for his work in "Twilight Dancers," a film on male prostitution.

Tala Santos won the Best Child Actress trophy for her moving portrayal of a daughter longing for her mother's care in "Inang Yaya."

Christian Luis Singson, the son of former Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson, copped the Best Child Actor award for "Barang," the Buboy Tan horror film produced by his father.

For their work on "KKK," Vito Cajili won the Best Editing Award; Jessie Lucas, Best Musical Score and Yeng Constantino, Best Theme Song ("Hawak Kamay.")

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‘Cable theft cases abound in eastern Metro’

By Kristine L. Alave

MOST CASES OF CABLE THEFT IN METRO Manila occur in the eastern part, an investigator of the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Co. said yesterday after they charged two men and a teenager with cable theft in Pasig City.

Jose Mari Cagaanan, a PLDT investigator, said they receive reports about cable theft in Pasig City and Rizal province every day.

He added that about two cases are reported daily in Pasig and around four in Rizal.

“Cable theft is really rampant. The PLDT loses millions from this,” Cagaanan said.

He added that robbers usually target copper cables as these can be sold at higher prices.

The wires are usually smuggled to China where the demand for copper is high.

The PLDT employee made the statement after the Pasig City police arrested three suspects accused of cutting P90,000 worth of cable wires on Sandoval Avenue yesterday morning.

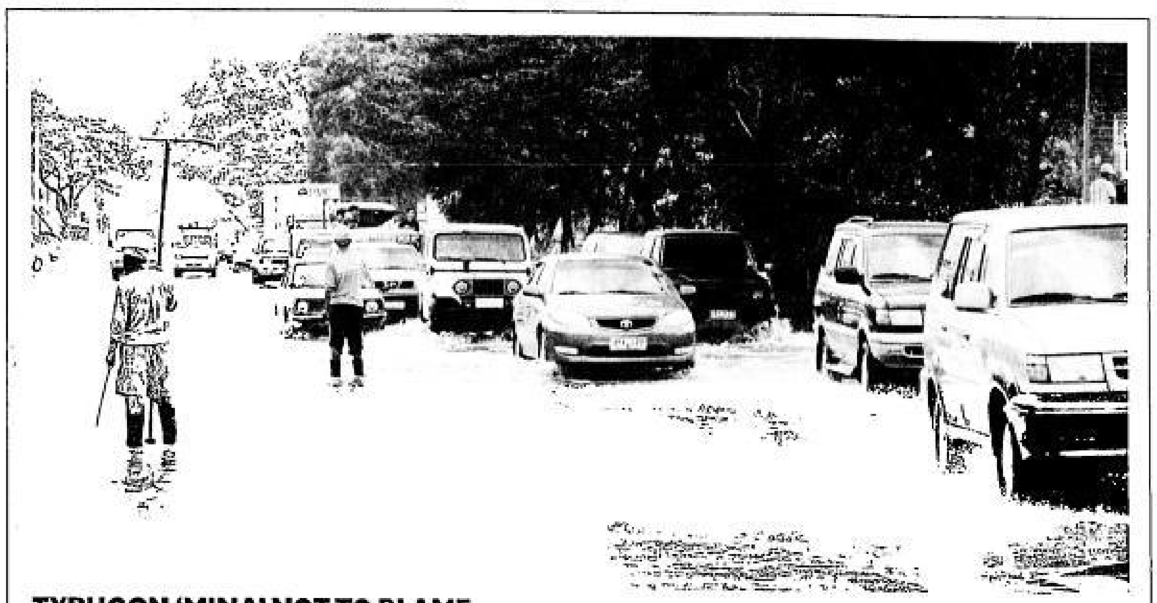
The police identified the suspects as Edgardo Orolfo, 18, and Mark Joseph Cruz, 20, both residents of Corazon de Jesus, San Juan City. A third suspect, a 16-year old boy, was also arrested.

The police report said the suspects were caught by members of the Barangay Security Force at around 5 a.m. as they were trying to steal an insulated copper cable measuring 10 to 15 meters.

The watchmen also recovered two kitchen knives and a metal saw from the three suspects. The police said the group had five members, but the other two escaped.

All three are now detained at the Pasig City police station although one suspect, a minor, will be turned over to the social welfare department.

Cagaanan said the stolen cable has resulted in downed telephone lines affecting about 600 households and business establishments in the areas of Pinagbuhatan in Pasig and Taytay, Rizal.



TYPHOON ‘MINA’ NOT TO BLAME ERNIE U. SARMIENTO
Several lanes of Marcos Highway in Masinag, Antipolo City were impassable yesterday as a busted water pipe resulted in flooding in the area, leaving motorists and commuters grumbling.

An appeal to Chief Justice Puno

ON TARGET

Ramon Tulfo

FARMERS FROM BUKIDNON ARE GETTING a lot of publicity—and needless to say, public sympathy—for their march from Sumilao town to Manila.

They’re asking the government to hand over to them 144 hectares of land, used to be owned by the Quisumbings, that they claim is covered by the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program.

The farmers project a struggle between the landless poor and the mighty landowner or the rich and the poor.

But are they really landless?

The farmers belong to the Mapalad or Mapadayonong Pinaghiusa sa mga Lumad Alang sa Damlag and the Salfa or San Vicente Landless Farmers Association.

These two associations, I was told, are allegedly co-owners of the 65 hectare property based on the Certificates of Land Ownership Awards.

The 144 hectares of land they want is adjacent to the 65-hectare land they reportedly own.

They can’t have the land they want because Malacañang and the Supreme Court have ruled that the land in question is not covered by the CARP.

So why are they marching to Manila?

Maybe because of their perception that the public is on their side.

This columnist has been advocating justice for the oppressed, who mostly belong to the havenots in our society, but I think that in the case of the Sumilao farmers, it’s the other way around.

* * *

Chief Justice Reynato S. Puno calls for a shift in the concept of justice—from punishment or retribution, to restoring peace, repairing and preventing harm, and healing both the victim and offender.

But what about the case of Jeff Quesada, 36, who’s in prison for rape, a crime that was impossible for him to have committed?

I appeal to the Chief Justice to nudge the Court of Appeals into speeding up the hearing of Jeff’s case.

Jeff is a quadriplegic, meaning he can’t move his hands and feet.

In short, he is completely paralyzed.

I ask the Chief Justice to request the appellate court justices handling Jeff’s appeal to go to the National Penitentiary in Muntinlupa City and see the man’s condition for themselves.

Anybody would say Jeff would not be capable of rape after seeing him.

The longer Jeff stays at the maximum security compound at the Muntinlupa prison, the more injustice we inflict on an innocent man.

Let me just repeat what I have been saying all along: I am not Jeff’s blood relative. Neither am I related to him by affinity.

I happen to know of Jeff’s case through my defunct “Isumbong mo kay Tulfo” radio and TV programs.

* * *

Why do our traffic enforcers allow truck trailers with no tail lights in the streets?

My friend, businessman Eric Pestana, says he has been knocking on the doors of the Philippine National Police and the Land Transportation Office to swoop down on truck trailers without tail lights, with zero results.

“It seems those government agencies don’t care whether or not people are killed by those road monsters,” Eric told me.

An undetermined number of people have been killed when their vehicles rammed into truck trailers that are either parked or plying the highways at night in without tail lights or reflectorized stickers.

For your information, Eric, I’ll tell you when the government will act—when a bigwig or VIP gets killed after his car rams into one of those monster truck trailers.

Let’s face it. The government—especially this government—is reactive, not proactive.

It only acts after the fact.

US ambassador to MMDA: Good job

By DJ Yap

UNITED STATES AMBASSADOR Kristie Kenney paid a visit to the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority yesterday and commended the agency for doing a “wonderful job” keeping the metropolis clean.

“We see you on the streets maintaining traffic and helping this great, great city become a wonderful and vibrant city,” Kenney told the MMDA employees during the flag-raising ceremony.

“Today is my big chance to express my thanks to you,” she said.

First time

MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando, who wore a Stars and Stripes necktie for the occasion, said it was the first time a US ambassador visited the agency.

“This is an affirmation of the very good relationship between the United States and us,” he said.

Apart from Fernando, Kenney was greeted by several local officials, including Fernando’s wife, Marikina Mayor Maria Lourdes Fernando, Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte, Taguig Mayor Freddie Tinga, and Mandaluyong Mayor Benhur Abalos.

Kenney shook hands with the MMDA employees and handed out lapel pins with American flags.

“Manila is such a special city to us. Rizal Park was built during the 1900s and designed by the same person who designed my city in the United States, Washington D.C,” she said.

American architect and urban planner Daniel Burnham designed plans for the cities of Manila and Baguio.

After her speech, Kenney was serenaded by the MMDA Choral with a rendition of Metro Manila’s official song, “Kapuri Puri Ka (You are to be praised).”

The song is a composition of Fernando.

VISAYAS
MINDANAO
KAHIT SAAN, NUMBER ONE.
Bandera
PANG-PINOY • PAMPAMILYA
Bandera
PANG-PINOY • PAMPAMILYA
TUBIG RASYON SA METRO, CL
Operasyon sa Basilan tuloy na
Bagong diskarte!
P30 LANG

‘Floating bookstore’ visits Manila

By Tina G. Santos

FIRST, THE GOOD NEWS. THE BIGGEST “floating bookstore” in the world, the M/V Doulos, is returning to the country for the sixth time.

Now, for the bad news. This could be the last visit of the 93-year-old ship, according to the Manila city government, quoting the ship’s project coordinator.

Mayor Alfredo Lim earlier announced that the M/V Doulos would be docking at the South Harbor from Nov. 30 to Dec. 23.

Lim said he welcomed the ship’s arrival because it would give the public a chance to buy books at much lower prices.

The ship carries more than 500,000 books and has more than 6,000 titles on display with subjects ranging from science, medicine, management, literature to hobbies. It also offers a wide range of educational books on computer science, accounting, law, physics and geography, among others.

Over the last three decades, Doulos has visited more than 100 countries, welcoming more than 20 million people on board. It has 350 volunteers from over 50 countries.

The M/V Doulos , built in 1914 two years after the Titanic, was originally a freighter named Medina. In 1948, it was renamed Roma and transported immigrants to Australia. The ship was transformed into a cruise liner in 1952. Its last visit to Manila was in January.

METROBRIEFS

Homicide, not suicide?

THE MANILA Police District is now eyeing foul play in the death of Jose Quimpo, a 12-year-old boy, who was initially reported to have committed suicide in Binondo, Manila on Nov. 17. Amado Caagbay, the boy’s neighbor, was arrested last Sunday after Quimpo’s sister, Catherine, told the police that she saw the suspect inside their house punching her brother hours before the latter’s body was found. Quimpo was discovered hanging from a beam on the third floor of their house in Binondo. He was earlier reported to have killed himself due to depression. Catherine said tshe kept silent about the incident for days because she was afraid the suspect would kill her next.

Tina G. Santos

Call for help from 3-year-old

THREE-YEAR-OLD Ranji Regalario has been confined at the Philippine General Hospital on Taft Avenue, Manila for the past five months due to an infection after undergoing an operation for hydrocephalus. A person who suffers from this ailment has a buildup of fluid inside the head, causing the brain to swell. Because of his condition, the boy from Calpi, Oas, Albay has been experiencing seizure attacks and loss of consciousness from time to time. His mother, Janet, is appealing to people to help her son overcome his illness. “I keep hoping that he’ll get better and live a normal life,” Janet said in her letter to the INQUIRER. Her husband is a farmer in Bicol region. The Regalarios can be reached at PGH Ward 11 at tel no. 5218450 local 2122. Those who want to donate money can deposit it in Janet’s Landbank account (account number 1446052248, account name: Janet Regalario).

Man lone casualty in Sta. Ana fire

By Tina G. Santos

A 59-YEAR-OLD MAN WAS KILLED IN A fire that hit his rented two-story apartment in Sta. Ana, Manila early yesterday morning.

SFO2 Emmanuel Gaspar, arson investigator at the Manila Fire Bureau, identified the fatality as Danilo Aguilar of Radium Street, Sta. Ana. He said the victim could have died of suffocation in a fire which lasted for 15 minutes

An investigation showed that the fire broke out around 1 a.m. at the victim’s room on the second floor.

Some residents in the area suspect that the fire could have been caused by an unattended lit candle inside the victim’s room. They claimed that the electricity had been cut off in the victim’s apartment.

Arson officials, however, said they were still conducting further investigation to determine the real cause of the blaze, which was put out around 1:15 a.m.

A relative of the victim told investigators that they were not aware that Aguilar was inside the room when the fire broke out.

She added that the victim was seen drinking with his friends the whole day last Sunday. Authorities placed the estimated damage to property at P50,000.

Tensions rise between Colombia, Venezuela

CHAVEZ AP

BOGOTA—COLOMBIA AND Venezuela faced Monday the worst crisis in their bilateral relations in years after the Colombian president accused his Venezuelan counterpart of seeking to install a Marxist government in Bogota and Caracas "froze" relations between the two countries.

"Your words, your positions, suggest you are not interested in peace in Colombia, but rather in Colombia becoming the victim of a terrorist government of the FARC," said Colombian President Alvaro Uribe on Sunday, referring to the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, the country's largest rebel group.

Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez said earlier he was putting bilateral ties in a "freezer," after Uribe dropped him and Colombian senator Piedad Cordoba as mediators in negotiations with the FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) on possibly swapping captured leftist rebels for high-profile hostages the guerrillas hold.

"We need a mediation with terrorists, and not people who try to lend legitimacy to terrorism," Uribe said referring to Chavez.

Chavez had said in Venezuela: "I declare to the world that I am putting relations with Colombia in the freezer. I do not believe in anyone in the Colombian government."

"They have spat brutally in our face when we worked heart and soul to try to get them on the road to peace," Chavez added.

He later said in a television interview that he was now ruling out rejoining the Andean Community of Nations, a trade bloc of which Colombia is a prominent member.

Venezuela withdrew from the group last year following its decision to join Mercosur, a different trade association led by Argentina and Brazil.

Caracas had been considering returning to the Andean Community, but Chavez said it was now out of the question.

"Now we are definitely not going back to the ACN," he said.

In Bogota, Cordoba said Sunday she was being investigated by her country's Supreme Court for treason.

"They notified me yesterday; I am being investigated for treason and collusion," Cordoba told Radio Caracol from Caracas. She did not say if the charges against her were related to her work as mediator or to unrelated allegations.

Uribe approved Chavez and Cordoba for their negotiator roles on Aug. 31, following a phone call from Chavez to Colombian Army General Mario Montoya inquiring about the hostages.

Cordoba came under considerable fire in government circles for meeting secretly with rebel commanders Ivan Marquez and Rodrigo Granda, whom the FARC selected to negotiate the swap of 45 abductees for about 500 jailed guerrillas. *AFP*

Syria joins Arab league at US peace conference

WASHINGTON—SYRIA ANnounced Sunday that it would attend the Middle East peace meeting beginning here on Monday night, joining Saudi Arabia and the rest of the Arab League participants in a turnabout that represented a victory for the Bush administration.

Syria, a supporter of groups opposed to a Palestinian peace with Israel, said it would send a deputy foreign minister to the meeting, which will continue Tuesday in Annapolis, Md. In return, Syria was promised that Israel's occupation of the Golan Heights, taken from Syria in the 1967 war, would be on the agenda.

The Annapolis meeting, a major initiative pressed by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, will begin negotiations on a peace treaty to end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict while simultaneously committing Israel and the Palestinians to carry out long-postponed obligations contained in the first stage of the 2003 peace plan known as the road map.

The presence of major Arab countries, including Syria, is meant to provide Arab sanction and support for the Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas to make the concessions required for peace. The Arabs promise Israel that a comprehensive peace will mean their recognition of the Jewish state. But a comprehensive peace must also include a resolution of the occupied Golan Heights.

Most important, however, Syria risked isolation from the rest of the Arab world if it did not come. Syria is already a kind of outlier, run by a Shiite minority and an ally of non-Arab, Shiite Iran. Syria supports Iranian-supported clients like the Shiite group Hezbollah in southern Lebanon, as well as Hamas and Islamic Jihad in the Palestinian territories—all fiercely opposed to a Palestinian-Israeli peace agreement or a recognition of Israel's right to exist.

The meeting opens Monday, after President Bush has separate meetings with Olmert and Abbas, with a lavish dinner at the State Department. On Tuesday, at Annapolis, the three leaders will meet privately, then deliver speeches. Then, after lunch, conferees meet in three consecutive sessions on the issues. On Wednesday, Bush will meet again, though separately, with Abbas and Olmert. *NYT*

BIG LEAGUE POLO

Elephant polo players from Chivas Regal of Scotland and British Gurkhas of Great Britain vie for the ball during the 26th International Elephant Polo Competition at Meghauly Forest in Chitwan District, some 200 km from Katmandu on Nov. 23. The match, organized to mark the 25th anniversary of the formation of the World Elephant Polo Association, was won by Chivas Regal of Scotland. AFP

In Bangladesh, a domino effect of crises

DHAKA, BANGLADESH—THE political storm that preceded nature's latest assault on this country still swirls overhead.

Nearly a year into an army-backed state of emergency, basic freedoms remain suspended, a sweeping anticorruption drive has stuffed the jails with some of Bangladesh's most influential business leaders and politicians, and a fragile economy is tottering under the pressure of floods at home and rising oil prices abroad.

The soaring cost of food is potentially the most explosive challenge facing the military-backed government that has run this country since Jan. 11, when, after debilitating political protests, scheduled elections were scrapped and emergency law was imposed.

Climbing inflation was compounded by an unusually harsh monsoon, which destroyed food crops along the flood plains in July.

Then, the Nov. 15 cyclone destroyed hectares of rice paddy, ruined the shrimp farms that dot the southern coast, and, according to the World Food Program, left roughly 2.3 million people in need of urgent food aid.

Storm relief is now the government's most pressing test, including averting famine and disease outbreaks, and ensuring aid distribution. The government estimates that six million people were affected by the storm.

The way the ordinary Bangladeshi is being pinched every day was on stark display the other day in a working-class quarter of Dhaka called Begunbari, a crowded warren of tenements.

Abdul Aziz, 63, a security guard who was buying vegetables at the local market, quietly confessed that even with three grown daughters working in the garment industry, his family was finding it harder to put enough food on the table.

A tailor who serves the neighborhood said his business had plummeted from about 50 orders a day to barely a couple. Few can afford new clothes when the basics—onions, oil, cauliflower—have become so much costlier. *NYT*

Seoul Asia's costliest city for expats

SINGAPORE—SEOUL IS ASIA'S costliest city for expatriates while the weaker yen has made Japanese cities more affordable, a survey released Monday said.

The latest twice-yearly survey by human resources firm ECA International showed the South Korean capital jump one notch higher to rank seventh globally in a list of the most expensive places for expatriates over the last 12 months.

Tokyo retained its place as the second most expensive Asian city but globally, the Japanese capital dropped out of the top 10 list for the first time because of the weaker yen.

"Depreciation of the yen against most other currencies, coupled with low inflation, has significantly reduced living costs for foreigners in Tokyo, Yokohama and Kobe in recent years," ECA International said.

Yokohama placed third, followed by Kobe, Hong Kong, Taipei, Beijing, Shanghai and Singapore, with the Chinese city of Guangzhou taking the 10th spot, the survey said.

There were 15 Chinese cities featured in the list of 39 Asian cities surveyed.

Higher food prices, along with the strengthening Chinese currency, have seen expatriates' living costs in Chinese cities go up, narrowing the gap with other more developed East Asian cities such as Hong Kong and Taipei.

"In China, soaring food, oil and grain product prices along with the strengthening yuan against the US dollar have meant that locations throughout China have pushed up through the ranking during this period," ECA International said. *AFP*

Australia PM-elect Rudd works on climate change

SYDNEY—AUSTRALIA'S PRIME minister-elect Kevin Rudd got down to work Monday on plans to sign the Kyoto Protocol and reverse unpopular labor laws that led to conservative leader John Howard's stunning ouster.

The center-left leader is reshaping foreign and domestic policy following his landslide victory Saturday that ended Howard's 11-year reign and left US President George W. Bush isolated over climate change and the Iraq war.

A day after Rudd announced he was preparing to attend a major conference on global warming in Bali next month, his deputy Julia Gillard said their Labor Party would immediately honor a campaign promise to ratify Kyoto.

"Kevin will be making that decision but you can expect it to be very soon. We need to ratify Kyoto as part of our commitments to dealing with climate change," she told Australian television.

"Ratifying Kyoto we can do without the parliament sitting," she said, outlining plans to implement election pledges that also included withdrawing Australian combat troops from the Iraq war.

Rudd revealed he had already received advice from officials on when Australia could ratify the protocol.

"We have just received that advice as I was driving out here and I'm yet to read it," he told reporters a day after meeting senior bureaucrats of the prime minister's office to set out his agenda for the Bali meeting.

Howard's defeat stripped Bush of a key ally on the eve of the Bali conference. Australia and the United States are the only two major industrial nations not to have ratified Kyoto.

Rudd, an economic conservative, has named global warming as his government's top priority, and he discussed the issue Sunday by telephone with British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono.

Howard and Bush refused to ratify the UN treaty aimed at cutting carbon emissions blamed for causing global warming, saying that doing so when China and India had not would damage their economies.

The political veteran also introduced new labor laws that reduced worker protections and boosted the flexibility of employers, which proved very unpopular on election day.

Voters rejected him in a comprehensive defeat that almost certainly also cost him his own electoral seat of 33 years, despite poll findings that most Australians believed his government was better equipped to manage the economy. *AFP*

RUDD AFP

On nanotechnology, experts see more risks than the public

By Marlowe Hood

PARIS—IN A SURPRISING REversal of roles, nanotechnology scientists outrival the general public in seeing a cause for concern in some aspects of their work, according to a study published Sunday.

Nanotechnology—the science of making things measured in units 10,000 times smaller than the width of a human hair—holds spectacular promise in virtually every sector.

Hundreds of consumer products already contain nanomaterials, most of which are cosmetics, sunscreens and cleaning products with microscopic particles.

But this is the only first step in what promoters of nano say is a revolution whose impact will be outsized compared to the technology's tiny scale.

In medicine, potential applications range from in-body diagnostic devices to tissue engineering to pinpoint drug delivery.

Nanomaterials far lighter and stronger than anything in use today could revolutionize the auto and airplane industries, and parallel developments are underway for robotics, computers, clothing, energy storage and air purification.

Two surveys, conducted among 363 nanotechnology scientists and engineers and among 1,015 US adults, find an intriguing contrast in attitudes about this fast-moving yet untested technology.

The average Joe and Jane are more worried than the experts that nano will cause job losses, an arms race and a loss of privacy, according to the surveys published on Sunday in Nature.

The scientists, unsurprisingly, say their work will lead to major breakthroughs in medicine, environmental cleanup and national defense.

But they are also significantly more concerned than the public about the risk of more pollution and unforeseen health problems from nano.

The authors of the study, led by Dietram Scheufele of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, chalk up this gap in viewpoints to two things.

One is that scientists have already launched a debate among themselves about nano-related risks, and lament a lack of research in this field. At the same time, the media promote the potential benefits of nano and downplay the risk aspect, thus giving a distorted view to the public.

Researchers looking at nano risks are focussing on any effect on health from minute particles that are breathed into the lungs or from putative nanorobots that would be inserted into the body to repair damaged tissue. Questions have also been raised as to whether nano materials could be toxic, for health and the environment.

"The Nano story is one of very slow and rather weak regulatory responses," commented Nigel Cameron, head of the Institute on Biotechnology and the Human Future at the Illinois Institute of Technology and an expert on nanotechnology.

"Public and political awareness of the technology—even though we have been talking about it for some time—is amazingly low," he said in an interview with AFP.

In the past, the arrival of new technologies such as nuclear power or genetically modified organisms are typically greeted with public enthusiasm followed by disquiet when an accident happens or other risks become apparent.

Such backlashes have had a crippling effect in some countries, prompting a freeze or pullout from nuclear power or a moratorium on genetically engineered crops.

By addressing the risks before their technology widely enters the public domain, nano experts hope to forestall this backward swing of the pendulum.

"Nanotechnology may ... be the first emerging technology for which scientists may have to explain to the public why they should be more rather than less concerned about some potential risks," said Scheufele. *AFP*

The WORLD

Editor **Luverne B. Gueco**

Sharif joins Pakistan poll battlefield

LAHORE, PAKISTAN—PAKISTAN'S EX-PREMIER Nawaz Sharif prepared Monday to file his papers for general elections, moving to capitalize on his political momentum after returning from exile to a hero's welcome.

After a procession from the airport to his city residence that turned into an all-night party, Sharif spent a few hours recuperating and consulting with family and senior party officials.

He flew home with a defiant message for President Pervez Musharraf—who ousted him in a coup in 1999—to end a state of emergency now in its fourth week.

"Musharraf has brought Pakistan to the verge of disaster," he told a crowd of supporters at a shrine to Lahore's guardian saint, after vowing to rid the country of dictatorship.

Sharif's return, just over a month after another ex-premier Benazir Bhutto flew home from exile, ratchets up the pressure on Musharraf to end emergency rule.

The military ruler has until Dec. 1 to hang up his uniform and swear a new oath as a civilian leader after a purged Supreme Court rubber-stamped his presidency for another five years.

Attorney General Malik Mohammad Qayyum told state television that Musharraf would take the oath on Thursday.

Qayyum was sick and not returning calls Monday, his office said.

Sharif's return throws Pakistan's political power-struggle wide open with the opposition divided as to whether to boycott the general elections.

If he forms a proposed alliance with Bhutto he could cause major problems for Musharraf and secure defections from the president's ruling party.

But Musharraf's willingness to allow Sharif to return may indicate that the president hopes to split the opposition vote.

Sharif denied any such understanding: "I have made no deal with Musharraf, my deal is with the people of Pakistan," he repeated Sunday.

Nevertheless, he and Bhutto are both two-time premiers and have been bitter rivals in the past, and while they have been talking about formulating a joint anti-Musharraf strategy, analysts doubt their alliance will stand the test of time.

Sharif is a religious conservative while Bhutto, a secular leader, is seen by the United States—keen to preserve Pakistan's role in the fight against al-Qaida and the Taliban—as pro-Western.

More crucial is the question of whether Sharif and Bhutto will boycott the election as they have threatened.

Staying away would rob Musharraf of the chance to portray the election to his critics around the world as evidence he is moving the country back toward democracy.

Taking part, opponents say, would be tantamount to legitimizing emergency rule.

Sharif and Bhutto both appear to accept they have to file nomination papers by Monday's noon deadline pending any future decision to boycott. *AFP*

FORMER Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif AP

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Dr. Antonio L. Tamayo, Chairman of the Board and CEO of the University of Perpetual Help Medical Centers, spearheads the acquisition of state-of-the-art diagnostic facilities. Also shown in photo are the medical staff of the Department of Radiology in both the Las Piñas and Biñan hospitals.

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The Department of Radiology of UPHMC in Las Piñas is chaired by Ernesto Pulido, M.D., with members Dr. Myla Macababad, Dr. Leandro Manalaysay, Dr. Emmanuel Almanzan, Dr. Julio Dumo, Dr. Lolita Largado-Reyes, Dr. Brenda Policarpio, Dr. Jolinda Almazan, Dr. Juan Carlo Cañonero, Dr. Maricel Miranda-de Guzman, Dr. Christine Moran and Dr. Martha Guia Lacson-Nuñez.

Their counterparts in Biñan, Laguna are radiology department chairman Antonio Pacifico, M.D., Dr. Angelita Andaya, Dr. Ramon Elazegui, Dr. Noreen Lastrilla, and Dr. Ma. Socorro Santos.

WHAT'S INSIDE

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LeBron does it all in Cavs victory /A28

Shooters fire up RP campaign as SEAG gets going

CARLOS Carag, Eric Ang and Jethro Dionisio (from left) make up the highly regarded RP trap team.

By Musong R. Castillo

BANGKOK—FILIPINO SHOOTERS HOPE TO be on target as they open the Philippines' bid to repeat as overall champion in the 24th Southeast Asian Games starting today at the Thailand Shooting and Clay Target ranges here.

No less than the country's first gold medal in these biennial Games are in the sights of Nikki Medina, Carolino Gonzales and Susan Aguado, who will open their respective bids in the 25-meter women pistol, air pistol and 50m rifle prone events.

These events fire off at 9 a.m., with the finals scheduled around 1 p.m.

Filipino marksmen contributed three gold, three silver and two bronze medals to the country's maiden overall championship in the 23rd edition of the Games in Manila.

But the intrepid bunch of Filipino shooters—all 19 of them arrived in this busy city on Sunday—will have to contend with the regional power Thais.

"They are in high spirits, we're looking to surpass our production in 2005," said shooting federation secretary-general Donald Padilla. "It really is hard to tell what our chances are."

Colorful opening ceremonies are not scheduled to unfurl until Dec. 6 in Nakhon Ratchasima, but action gets under way today in shooting and on Dec. 1 with the football competitions.

The Philippines will not see action in football until Dec. 3 as it is entered only in the women's event.

Gonzales is also entered in the 50m pistol, which fires off tomorrow like the 10m air rifle individual and team events, where Emerito Concepcion, Darryl Sandoval and Antonio Hermoso are entered.

And then there is Nathaniel "Tac" Padilla, the basketball-loving marksman who will compete in his 17th Games. He teams up with Gonzales and Robert Donalvo in the 25m standard pistol on Wednesday.

Padilla's favorite rapid-fire pistol event opens on Thursday.

Donalvo, Edwin Fernandez, Eddie Torres and Rocky Pardilla will carry the fight for Team Philippines in the 50m rifle prone and individual events.

Athens Olympics veteran Jethro Dionisio, once known as the Fastest Gun Alive, guns for the skeet and trap gold medals together with Eric Ang and Carlos Carag in the weekend.

Thailand won the bulk of the gold medals—nine, as well as seven silvers and six bronzes—in Manila.

Like the Philippines, Vietnam and Malaysia also bagged three gold medals each in the last SEA Games.

French GM ousts Laylo

KHANTY-MANSIYSK, RUSSIA—FILIPINO Grandmaster Darwin Laylo yielded to French super GM Etienne Bacrot in the second of their two-game duel and bowed out after the first round of the World Chess Cup here late Sunday.

The French Open champion Bacrot (Elo 2695) won with the white pieces over Laylo, who advanced to the 128-man field by finishing seventh in the Asian Individual Chess Championships held in Mandaue City, Philippines, last September.

Laylo was held to a draw by Bacrot in their first game despite playing white.

Other notable first-round winners were GM Vassily Ivanchuk of Ukraine, who swept Pedro Aderito of Angola, 2-0; GM Shakhriyar Mamedyarov of Azerbajjan, who crushed Khaled Razik of Egypt, 2-0; GM Levon Aronian of Armenian, who whipped Juan Hobaica of Argentina, 2-0; GM Alexei Shirov of Spain, who humbled Robert Gwaze of Zimbabwe, 2-0; GM Peter Svidler of Russia, who bested Eduardo Iturizzaga of Venezuela, 2-0; GM Michale Adams of England, who nipped Igor Zugic of Canada, 1.5-.5; GM Alexander Grischuk of Russia, who outclassed Dracy Lima of Brazil, 1.5-.5; GM Magnus Carlssen of Noray, who downed Zong Zau of Australia, 2-0.

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Pool B teams chase q'final bonus anew; Hapee targets No. 9

NORWOOD

STANDINGS	W	L
POOL A		
Hapee	8	0
Harbour	6	2
SMig Coffee	3	4
POOL B		
Mail & More	4	4
Toyota Bal.	4	4
Pharex	1	7
Bacchus	0	8

GAMES TODAY
(*Rizal Coliseum*)
12 nn—Pharex vs Bacchus
2 p.m.—Mail and More vs Toyota Balintawak
4 p.m.—San Mig Coffee vs Hapee

POOL B TEAMS TANgle in a pair of crucial matches, while unbeaten Hapee aims to stretch its winning run in the PBL V-Go Extreme Energy Drink Cup today at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum.

Mail and More and Toyota Balintawak, both sharing the Pool B lead at 4-4, will clash at 2 p.m. with the winner inching closer to the twice-to-beat quarterfinal privilege.

Pharex will try to secure the last quarterfinal berth versus winless Bacchus in the 12 noon curtain-raiser.

In Pool A, Hapee will go into its 4 p.m. bout versus San Mig Coffee with little pressure after an unbeaten run paved the way for an outright Final Four stint.

And coach Jun Noel believes his Complete Protectors still have the energy to secure their ninth straight victory.

"The determination is always there, they never give up," said Noel, who has been drawing consistent performances from Mark Borboran, Reed Juntilla, Larry Rodriguez and celebrated Fil-Am Gabe Norwood.

Mail and More coach Allan Gregorio also remains confident that his Comets are peaking at the right time.

"The system is in tune; everything is falling into place," said Gregorio. "But more than the physical (preparation), the players' hearts and minds should be in the game."

Both the Comets and the Road Kings are coming off wins that boosted their bids for the last quarterfinal bonus.

The Coffee Kings, clustered in Pool A, already secured the first incentive. *Jasmine W. Payo*

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V-League: Ateneo, UST tossers duel for title slot

GAME TODAY
(*The Arena, San Juan*)
5 p.m.—Santo Tomas vs Ateneo

JUST WHEN ABOUT everybody was expecting University of Santo Tomas to cruise trouble-free to the championship round, Ateneo emerged to alter the scenario.

The Tigresses and the Lady Eagles meet one last time today in the 2007 Shakey's V-League women's volleyball second conference to determine the tournament's second finalist.

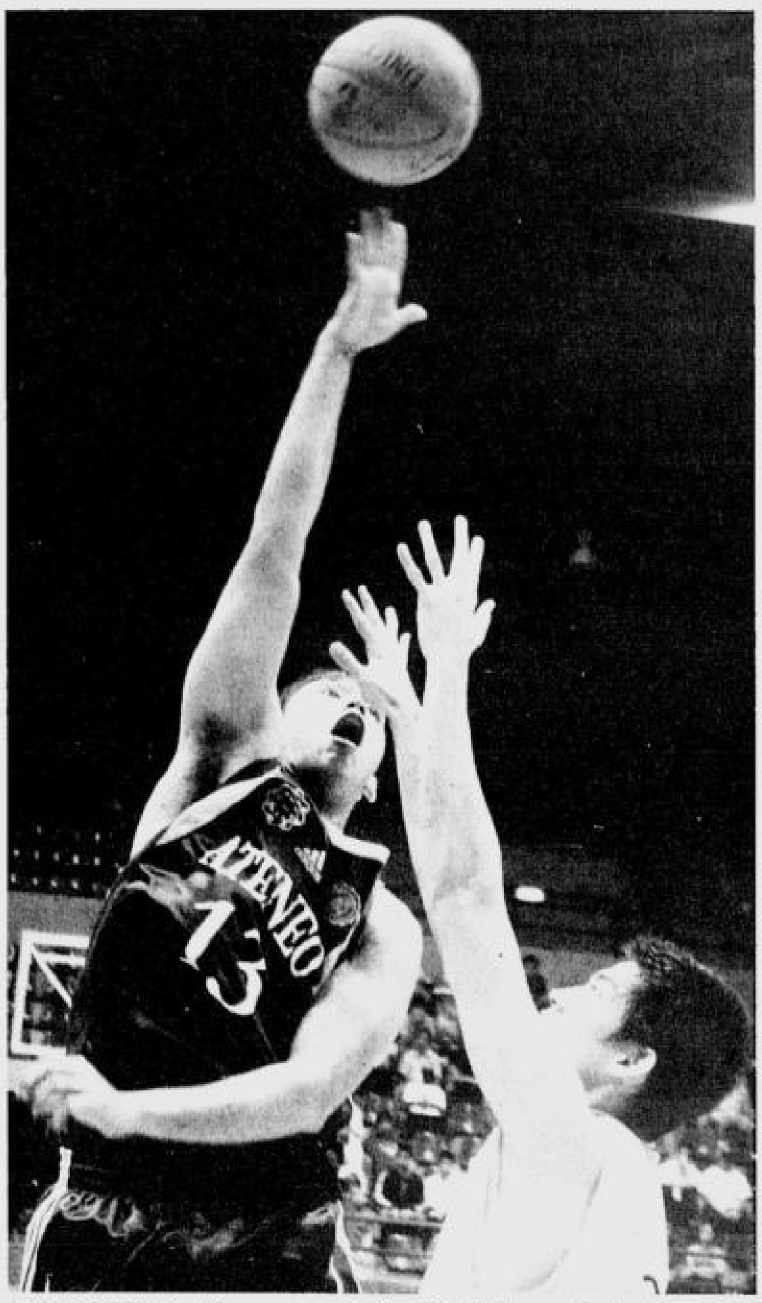
The winner in the 5 p.m. duel at The Arena will face San Sebastian College in the best-of-three finals beginning Friday while the loser will be relegated to the battle for third against Adamson University. Both match-ups are best-of-three affairs.

UST, also the UAAP defending champion, won the first conference crown with a sweep of three-peat NCAA winner San Sebastian while Ateneo could only finish fifth.

Despite Ateneo dealing UST its lone loss in the elimination round and even with the presence of talentéd Thai import Lithawat Kesinee, it wasn't expected that the Lady Eagles could spoil an anticipated rematch between the first conference protagonists.

But the Lady Eagles won three out of their four semifinal games, including a 20-25, 25-21, 25-19, 25-22 whipping of the Tigresses last Sunday, to force today's playoff. Both teams finished with 8-3 records.

On the other hand, the Tigresses dropped their last two matches. *Romina S. Austria*



ATENEO'S CLaiford Arao tosses a hook off UST's Chester Taylor in their semifinal match yesterday. AUGUST DELA CRUZ

Eagles forge final duel vs UV Lancers

By Jasmine W. Payo

ATENEO AND THE UNIVERSITY OF Visayas arranged a championship showdown in the Fil-Oil/Flying V National Collegiate Champions League after taking similar routes to the final yesterday at The Arena in San Juan.

Chris Tiu sizzled early as the Blue Eagles pummeled the Santo Tomas Tigers, 92-66, in a highly physical encounter.

The sweet-shooting Tiu, a mainstay of the national men's team, rescued the Eagles from a 0-7 start by pumping in 15 points in the first half built around a 4-of-7 shooting clip that helped his team to a 40-28 spread at the break.

"It was a physical game but we were able to accomplish a few things, which is one, we pretty much controlled Jervy (Cruz) inside," said Ateneo coach Norman Black. "We know we cannot stop Jervy, we just want to control him and not let him have a monster night against us."

Bruisers Rino Berame and Michael Luga posted double-double performances as the Lancers dominated the second half for an 80-71 victory over the STI Olympians in the first semifinal bout.

GAMES TOMORROW
(*The Arena*)
2 p.m.—STI vs UST
4 p.m.—Univ. of Visayas vs Ateneo

"We had the advantage, especially at the low post," said coach Boy Cabahug of the seven-time Cebu Schools Athletic Foundation Inc. (Cesafi) champions.

Berame came off the bench to finish with 21 points, 17 rebounds and four blocks. The 6-foot-6 bruiser even got more good news when Toyota Balintawak announced it had signed him up to play in the next PBL conference.

The Eagles and the Lancers will fight for the title—and the P500,000 scholarship that goes with it—at 4 p.m. tomorrow at The Arena.

The scores:
First Game

UV 80—Berame 21, Luga 20, Lanete 14, Mepaña 10, Diputado 7, Dennison 5, Slaughter 3, Villanil 0.

STI 71—Micutuan 25, Tiongco 8, Porto 8, Flor 8, Balneg 8, Cabangon 6, Mendoza 4, Tolentino 2, Mabayo 2.

Quarters: 20-14, 38-32, 55-49, 80-71

Second Game

ATENEO 92—Tiu 19, Arao 17, Al-Hussaini 13, Long 13, Barracoso 9, Escueta 8, Monfort 5, Baclao 4, Baldos 2, Austria 2, Sumalinog 0.

UST 66—Ababou 22, Mirza 14, Allera 13, Cruz 8, Canlas 4, Cuan 3, Espiritu 2, Soriano 0, Basa 0, Badua 0, Gile 0, Taylor 0, Dizon 0, Cortez 0.

Quarters: 17-11, 40-28, 63-48, 92-66

RP eyes end to 10-year Putra Cup drought

By Musong R. Castillo

THE NATIONAL GOLF TEAM MIGHT AS WELL DON a few spy glasses and hire men to do a little reconnaissance on the side while the 2007 Putra Cup is being played.

After all, the opposition that the Philippine golf team will face in the coming Southeast Asian Games will be showing up in this prestigious meet, making the tournament a virtual preview of the biennial event.

Singapore prepares its defense of the crown while the Philippines, Thailand and Malaysia are expected to crowd it for top honors when the event also known as the Southeast Asian Amateur Golf Team championship kicks off today at The Country Club in Laguna.

Left without the reigning national amateur champion, the RP squad has hoisted its hopes on the shoulders of ex-national titlist Jay Bayron, Ferdie Aunzo, Jhonnel Ababa and Mark Fernando.

The tournament itself has fetched an important battlecry: Ending a 10-year title drought in the annual shot-making contest.

But no one is overlooking the fact that with the SEA Games just around the corner, getting a feel of the players who the Filipinos will battle it out against for the gold is right up there in the list of priorities.

As to the first goal, the locals are hoping that familiarity with the danger-fraught par-70 layout will help them bag the trophy.

"It's a plus that we are playing on our home course," said national team mentor Bong Lopez. "But The Country Club is one tough layout that changes in character, especially with the wind, thus."

"We have to do well here because this will also determine the progress of the team with regard to its form heading to the SEA Games next month," said Lopez.

Aguilar bags moto crown

MOTOCROSS STAR GLENN AGUILAR emerged a champion after beating Kenneth San Andres and Jimboy Marcelo in the National Motorcycle Sports and Safety Association (Namssa) National Series at the Fast Track Circuit in Taguig City.

With his victory, Aguilar virtually bagged the 2007 Namssa 125/250F crown as he stretched his margin to 56 points, which is already unreachable going into the final race that will be held on Dec. 9.

He also holds a 20-point lead in the 250/450 championship and Team KTM-Access Plus team manager Toti Alberto, a former motocross and superbikes champion, expects Aguilar tó nail an unprecedented 11th championship in the Pro Open.

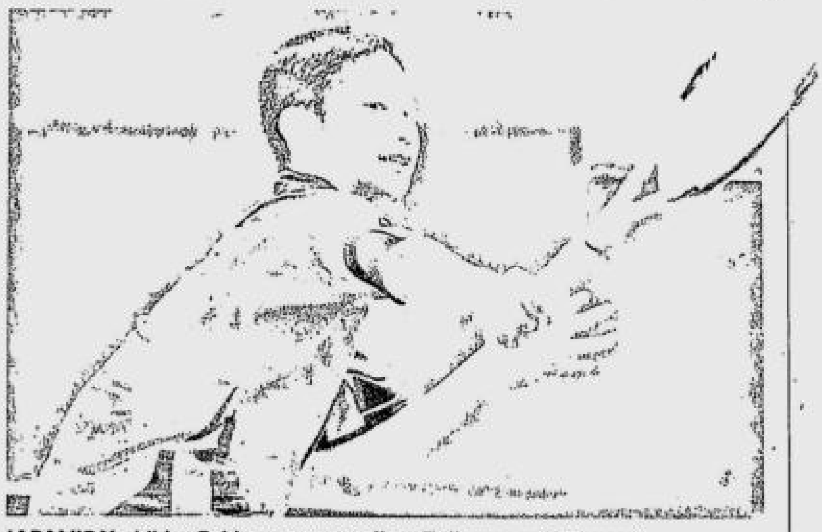
Aguilar's win actually doused cold water on earlier complaints that his oversized engine that may have violated the rule and regulations of the event.

Masiello boots out Espedido

SECOND SEED LUCA MASIELLO OF Italy sent Carlos Espedido, one the last Filipinos standing in the qualifying round, out of the Phinma International Junior Tennis Championship by scoring a 6-3, 6-1 triumph yesterday at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

Playing his first competitive tournament after a two-week layoff, Espedido, a 17-year-old student from De La Salle Zobel, never got his rhythm as he failed to come up with an answer to the steady baseline game of the taller and experienced Italian.

"He's a lot stronger and had a very good serve," said Espedido, who earlier defeated Phutthaphong Jintasophon of Thailand, 6-2, 6-0, to gain the right to face the crafty Italian.



JAPAN'S Yoshihiro Sekine returns to Iben Zulkarnan of Indonesia. RYAN LIM

Espedido was the only Filipino left in the main draw after seven other homegrown bets were eliminated.

Earlier, top seed Benjamin Wagland of Australia humbled Hu Hao-yang of Taipei , 6-2, 6-0; third seed Iben Zulkarnain of Indonesia toppled Yoshiro Sekine of Japan 6-2, 6-0; and Artem Ilyushin of Russia defeated Filipino Marco Polo Suntay, 6-1, 6-0, in the boy's singles.

In the distaff side, top seed Hayley Ericksen showed Kaede Hayase of Japan the door with a 6-3, 6-3 victory.

When will RMSC be relocated?

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

SHORTLY AFTER HE WAS ELECTED president of the Philippine Olympic Committee in 2004, former Tarlac Rep. Jose "Peping" Cojuangco promised that "building a new stadium is a top priority in my POC presidency."

He told this writer in an exclusive interview that the outmoded Rizal Memorial Sports Complex has outlived its usefulness, adding that "we can't get anywhere in our quest for an Olympic gold without a modern international-standard stadium with highly technical facilities where our athletes could train properly."

Even though the country is cash-strapped, the 72-year-old Cojuangco said he would find ways to source out the funds needed to build the new complex. He said he has found an alternative and ideal place to replace aging RMSC in Sacobia, Tarlac.

"Sacobia is elevated, cool, pollution-free and safe," stressed Cojuangco. Although it is a part of the Clark Development Zone, Sacobia, which covers about 5,700 hectares, is still too far away from the controversial sites in Clark Field where toxic wastes left by American servicemen were reportedly present.

Since then, nothing was heard about the plan. Because of this, an update from the POC would be most welcomed thru my e-mail address: coleen_lordyq@yahoo.com.ph.

* * *

For the record, Cojuangco is not alone.

In the 1950s, several top sports officials, including members of the defunct Philippine Amateur Athletic Federation headed by the late Antonio de las Alas, started the move to relocate the RMSC to a more suitable, healthier and pollution-free location outside the city of Manila.

These PAAF leaders sought the help of then President Carlos P. Garcia to give them a grant transferring the RMSC to the area now occupied by the Quezon City Memorial Circle.

However, Garcia disapproved the request because, my sources said, he was not properly briefed beforehand by members of the PAAF executive committee.

Among those in the powerhouse delegation who called on Garcia were Education Secretary Manuel Lim, PAAF president Sen. Ambrosio Padilla, Executive Secretary Enrique Quema, PAAF secretary treasurer Serafin Aquino, Sen. Lorenzo Tañada, Rep. Jose Aldeguer, AFP Chief of Staff Gen. Manuel Cabal (President Fidel Ramos was his aide-de-camp then), Director of Public Schools Dr. Vitaliano Bernardino, former POC president Col. Julian Malonso, Dr. Fernando Bautista of the University of Baguio, lawyer Leonardo "Skip" Guinto, Dr. Gamaliel Gonzalez, SSS Commissioner Ramon Gaviola and Cebu Rep. Eduardo Gullas.

* * *

Much later, many suggested other alternative sites, including Muntinlupa City, which reader Mauricio Austria said "has never been flooded because it is about 300 meters above sea level and overlooks the scenic Laguna Bay and the beautiful rooftops at the Ayala Alabang subdivision and Susana Heights."

Said he: "The people of Muntinlupa would prefer to have a modern sports complex in their city rather than be known for the infamous tag of Muntinlupa Bilibid Prisons."

Other possible relocation sites are the cities of Tagaytay, Baguio and Antipolo, or farther down south, Cebu and Bacolod.

Then considered one of the most modern and the best in Asia, the Rizal Memorial Sports Complex was built at a cost of P1.5 million in 1936, when Jorge Vargas was the PAAF president.

In 1932, President Manuel L. Quezon spearheaded the construction of the RMSC in memory of national hero Dr. Jose Rizal. Several events were held to raise funds for the project, including the sellout three-game baseball series in December 1934 featuring American baseball legends Babe Ruth, Lou Gehrig and Charlie Gehringer.

SPORTSWATCH

Ramirez, Cojuangco head PSA Forum guests

A THREE-IN-ONE OFFERING, FEATURING three big sports events in the coming weeks, makes up Tuesday's session of the PSA Forum at the Shakey's United Nations Avenue branch.

Invited guests are Philippine Sports Commission chair William Ramirez, Philippine Olympic Committee president Peping Cojuangco, newly elected Philippine Football Federation president Jose Mari Martinez and Cathy Rivilla.

Anniversary 4-cock derby

THE MUCH-AWAITED ANNIVERSARY 4-cock derby at Elorde Cockpit Stadium in Sucat Road, Parañaque, is scheduled Tuesday starting at 3 p.m.

Promoted by businessman/sportsman Johnny Elorde, the derby is in celebration of the cockpit's 14th year and offers a guaranteed prize of P300.000. Pot money is pegged at P8,800 with the handler and the gaffer of the winning entry receiving P20,000 and P10,000, respectively. The fastest kill will also receive P30,000.

Bakbakan championship

THE RECORD-SHATTERING NFGB Bakbakan National 10-stag derby, which attracted 1,463 entries from all over the country, enters its grand championship today at Araneta Coliseum.

The champion and runners-up will receive their trophies and prizes right after tonight's last fight, said Ricoy Palmares Jr., president of the organizing National Federation of Gamefowl Breeders (NFGB).

Willie Nicolas of Cagayan Valley leads the series with nine wins and one loss.

Pasig weights submission

SUBMISSION OF WEIGHTS (1.8 KG to 2.4 kg) will be held today in connection with the Cock Season Opener 4-cock derby of Pasig Square Garden.

Competition starts tomorrow, featuring the 2-cock eliminations. Another qualifying round will be staged on Dec. 1 while the final sizzles on Dec. 3.

For an entry fee of P7,700, the winners will get a guaranteed prize of P1.2 million. Hosts are George and Danny Ty and Manny Berbano. For details, call 646-5858 and 646-5828.

BY TOP CHOICE

Race 1—(Qrt/Tri)—Majestic Queen (7), Awesome Buddy (5), Gutsy (6), D'Minnow's (1)
Race 2—(Qrt/Tri)—Allez Allez (1), Mathematics (6), Red Scooter (3), Carry Over (2)
Race 3—(Qrt/Tri)—Pure Energy (5), Pirouette (7), Chabacana (1), Expiditer (4)
Race 4—(Qrt/Tri)—Tigerwould (1), Salazaam (4), Wind and Glory (5), Dumadagundong (6)
Race 5—(Qrt/Tri)—Dondon's Entry (6), Lady Beware (3), Stradivarious (5), Desert Breeze (2)
Race 6—(Qrt/Tri)—Memory of Fire (6), Viva Treasure (8), Storm Signal (5), Touchmenot (2)
Race 7—(Penta/Qrt/Tri)—Look of Love (10), Princess Leighla' (11), Lovely Tara (1), Panibugho (10), Worth Ur While (4)
Race 8—(Super 6/Qrt/Tri)—Erica's Talent (9), Raise A Dancer (11), Odyssey (2), Yao Man (7), BMI Baby (6), Dow Jones (3)

Dimakiling stays in contention

Standings after six rounds:
5 points—H. Ni (China), C. Li(China)
4.5—W. So (RP), M. Paragua (RP), O. Dimakiling (RP), R. Dableo (RP), R. Andador (RP)
4—J. Gonzales (RP), J. Sadorra (RP), B. Nadera (RP), Z. Zhong (Singapore), N. A. Dung (Vietnam), R. Li (China), W. Zhou (China), D. T. Hai (Vietnam)
3.5—E. Torre (RP), O. Barbosa (RP), R. Bancod (RP), E. Senador (RP), R. Nolte (RP), H. Nouri (RP), D. Ballecer (RP), F. Pialan (RP), X. Zhang (China), Tirto (Indonesia), S. Wahyudi (Indonesia), L. Yu (China), Q. Huang (China), W. Yu (China), N. Siluru (Indonesia)

By Roy Luarca

IT WAS INTERNATIONAL MASTER OLIVER DIMAKILING'S turn to gain ground in the sixth round of the 2007 President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo Cup international chess championship at the Duty Free Fiesta Mall in Paranaque City late Sunday.

The Turin chess Olympian bested fellow Filipino Dino Ballecer with the white pieces to climb to a share of third to seventh places with countrymen Grandmaster Mark Paragua, GM-candidates Wesley So and Ronald Dableo and unheralded Rolando Andador with 4.5 points out of a perfect six.

They were only half a point behind top seed GM Ni Hua and Li Chao, both of China.

Ni, the highest-rated player in the nine-round Swiss system event with an Elo of 2641, halted Li's five-game winning streak in the featured sixth-round encounter.

The 23-year-old Paragua, bidding to regain his stature as the country's highest-ranked player, drew with Andador in another all-Filipino encounter.

So, only 14, and Dableo agreed to halve the point, while Nadera trounced Alex Milagrosa.

Filipino GM-candidate Jayson Gonzales and Singapore-based Filipino Julio Sadorra were in a big bunch at 4.0 points.

Chinese WGM Zhang Jilin showed her mettle when she upended IM Chito Garma.

Teener Cristy Lamiel Bernales also showed her mettle by downing three-time Olympian WIM Beverly Mendoza in an all-female duel.

WOMAN GM Zhang Jilin ponders her next move against Wesley So.

Other sixth-round results saw IM Ronald Bancod outplay Victor Bruce Lluch, Surya Wahyudi of Indonesia down Voltaire Sevillano, Emmanuel Senador trip Robert Suelo Jr., Ernesto Fernandez stop WGM Gu Xuaobing of China, Richard Bitoon humble Rodrigo Atotubo, FM Roderick Nava subdue Rodolfo Panopio Jr and IM-candidate Kim Steven Yap trounce Christopher Castellano.

Dimakiling was tangling with Ni while So was battling Li in the seventh round at presstime.

Camacho, other RP bets do good

ANTALYA, TURKEY—CHERADEE Chardine Camacho is keeping the Filipinos' bid alive in the World Youth Chess Championships at the Limra Hotel here.

The 14-year-old Camacho chalked up five wins, two draws and one loss to gain a share of fourth to ninth places after eight rounds in the girls 14 years old and under category.

Camacho trails top seed WGM Nazi Paikidze of Georgia by a point and Katarzyna Adamowicz of Poland and WFM Desi Cori of Peru by half a point.

Haridas Pascua, Karl Victor Ochoa and Paulo James Florendo are also doing well in the boys' 14, 16 and 18 years old and under categories.

Pascua is tied for 15th to 26th places with 5.5 points, one a half point behind solo leader FM Santosh Vidit of India.

Ochoa chalked up 4.5 points, good for a tie for 36th place, while Florendo has five points, two points behind Ivan Popov of Russia.

Tougher Bautista faces Meza Dec. 2

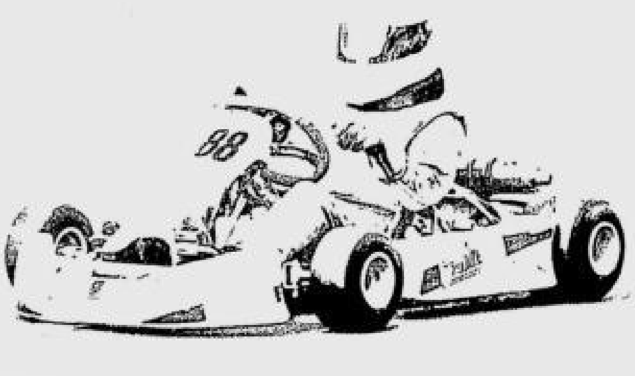
REY "BOOM BOOM" BAUTISTA has learned his lesson. He will seek redemption when he tangles with Mexican toughie Antonio "Barrio" Meza on Dec. 2 at the Araneta Coliseum.

Sent to the canvass twice and handed his first loss by Mexican Daniel Ponce de Leon right in the first round in his last outing, Bautista now knows that his punching power won't suffice. He's got to learn to evade killer blows as well.

Toward this end, Bautista has trained religiously at the ALA Gym and another world-ranked Filipino fighter—Z "The Dream" Gorres—swears his stable mate is now a more complete fighter.

"Boom Boom has been working heavily to prepare for this fight," said Gorres. "But more than that, he has added head movement and other defensive stuff to complement his offensive arsenal."

The 21-year-old Bautista will headline the Payback card promoted by Third Force Promotions and ABC-5. *Salven L. Lagumbay*



JOEY Orduna cruises to victory.

Orduna routs field

FOR JOEY ORDUNA, SIMPLY winning the Overall Mini-ROK crown wasn't enough. He had to do it with aplomb.

The 12-year-old Orduna of R2R-Tuason Racing Team capped a dominant season by posting a sweep in the championship leg of the 2007 National Karting Super Series at the Carmona Circuit Philippines.

Orduna, a Grade 6 student of Maria Montessori School, showed near-perfect driving to post the fastest laptime of 48.991 seconds and turn back Cebuano rivals Jet Calderon and Tonyo Carcel for the overall title.

He completed the 15-lap final race in 12 minutes and 13.498 seconds to beat Calderon by 11 seconds and bring his total to 543 points.

"It's now or never, that's why I gave it all I got," said Orduna, who lauded Petron, Standard Insurance, Ford Racing, Oakley, Acer, Tuason Racing, AmbiPur, Goodyear, TonyKart, HJC Auto Helmets, AIM Racing Gauges, R2R Racing Suits and Alpinestars Racing Apparel for backing his campaign.

Orduna also cited the support given by his parents Jake and Zeny and sister Andrea as major factors in his six victories, three at the Carmona Circuit Philippines and one each at the Batangas Racing Circuit, Enchanted Kingdom and the Boomland Track, out of eight races. *Roy Luarca*

Pagadian rips Malaysia 5

TAGAYTAY CITY—THE PAGADIAN Explorers whipped the National Basketball League Selection of Malaysia, 90-78, Sunday to clinch a semifinal slot in the 2007 Tagaytay-NBC International Invitational Cup tournament at the Tolentino Sports and Activity Center here.

Montaña Pawnshop-Davao also advanced to the semifinals by crushing Indonesia's Stadium squad, 70-49, in the other match.

The Explorers of Mayor Sammy Co and the Jewellers of businessman Armando Quibod controlled the games throughout.

The games pitting the Explorers against the Jewellers and the GenSan Pacman Warriors of boxing icon Manny Pacquiao against host Tagaytay-Spring Cooking Oil were scheduled late yesterday. The winners will dispute the title tomorrow.

The scores:

PAGADIAN 90—Orquillas 21, Saludsud 14, Quilo 13, Singco 10, Singedas 6, Santiago 6, Villaver 4, Ayuk 4, Pamaran 3, Naron 3, Espiritu 2, Latoreno 2, Benitez 2, Sierra 0, Daroya 0.

MALAYSIA 78—Wee 22, Gamboa 13, Ng 10, Sanz 10, Tan 7, Chinchoonsion 6, Siong 5, Soon 3, Tsunhou 2.

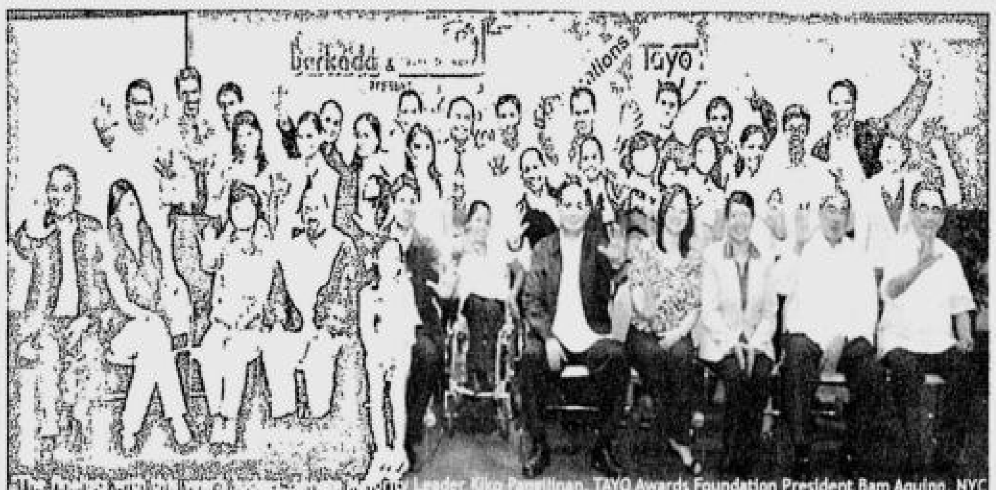
Quarters: 25-17, 46-36, 73-50, 90-78

DAVAO 70—Jawod 12, Ayson 10, Poloyapoy 8, Lamocha 8, Abanes 6, Canlas 6, Braga 5, Clavel 4, Edrinal 4, Fernandez 3, Dawal 2.

INDONESIA 49—Maruty 10, Rarcing 9, Pattikawa 8, Ramci 5, Tambayong 4, Slamet 4, Purwono 3, Widiatmo, Pandu 3.

Quarters: 16-14, 23-17, 57-37, 70-49.

The Ten Accomplished Youth Organizations Awards:



[illegible] Leader Kiko Pangilinan, TAYO Awards Foundation President Bam Aquino, NYC Executive Director Apolonio Maleniza II, Ms. Cecille Alcantara (Coca-Cola Foundation, Mr. Roberto Calinao (TeaM Energy Foundation, Usec. Alicia Bala (DSWD), Mr. Isagani Yambot (Inquirer), Mr. Vic Carlos Palpallatoc (Cebu Pacific), Ms. Veronica Pangilinan (Caltex Phils), Mr. Ramon Isberto (SMART), Prof. Edel Guiza (AIM), Fr. Teodulo Gonzales SJ (CEFAM), and youth icon Ms. KC Concepcion. Also in photo is Ms. Frankie Pangilinan.

Celebrating the power of the Filipino youth to make a difference.

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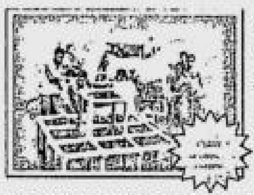
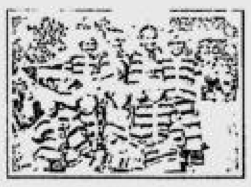
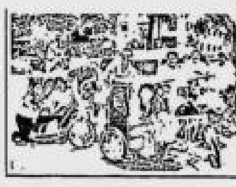


SAMAHAN NG MALILIIT NA MANGINGISDA NG KABATAANG BALTAK (SMM KaBaltak)
Project Entry: Concrete Artificial Reef
The group installed various recycled materials, encouraging the community to take care of their marine resources and bringing about additional source of income through tourism and recreational diving.



KABAYAN CULTURAL ORGANIZATION FOR SUPPORTING, DEVELOPING AND EMPOWERING THE YOUTH (KOSDEY)
Project Entry: KOSDEY Cultural "A"dvocacy Campaign
KOSDEY conducts cultural research camps and prints annual digests to rally the youth in their community to spur a cultural renaissance that helps establish Kabayan as a cultural center for the Ibaloi and Kalangoya.

UP HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT COUNCIL
Project Entry: Academic Mentoring Program
Council members implement educational intervention programs that utilize a pool of volunteers that help other public school students cope with academic difficulties.



VOLUNTEERS FOR INTEGRATED PUBLIC SERVICE (VIPS)
Project Entry: Rent-To-Own Trisikad
VIPS empowers the community by enabling organization members devote their extra time to teaching the value of hard work and owning a business by making it possible for some families to own trisikads to help augment their financial burdens.

SILAK SA KAUSWAGAN YOUTH ORGANIZATION (SAKAYAN)
Project Entry: Tahusan Smile
The area's eco-tourism potential was developed after the group organized activities such as water sports, sandcastle-building and body painting contests and having volunteer lifeguards man the beach and implementing weekend clean-up drives.

BOOKS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SOCIETY (BITS)
Project Entry: Adopt-A-Library Project
Club affiliates contributed to the development of a culture of reading by first donating their collection of storybooks, textbooks and other reading materials and eventually establishing a mini-library in an out-of-the way elementary school.

JOLO EMERGENCY RESCUE NETWORK
Project Entry: Establishment of an Emergency Medical System in Jolo
Realizing the need to have trained medical first-responders provide pre-hospital care whenever necessary, the young people in the conflict-laden community helped institue the area's EMS.

KAPANSANAN AY AKIBAT SA KAUNLARAN
Project Entry: Making Rehabilitation Services Accessible for Children with Special Needs
Members make rehabilitation services such as occupational and speech therapies and special education affordable to children with special needs, which also include workshops and seminars fowhich also include workshops and seminars for family members.

UP SANDIGAN
Project Entry: Reach for More H.O.Mes (Health Education, Outreach Program, Medical Consultation and Patient Counseling/Libreng Serbisyo at Gamot)
Organization officers and members implement a comprehensive program consisting of free medical consultations and access to effective, yet affordable medicines to help improve the health status of a community.

INCLUSIVE YOUTH CENTER (IYC)
Project Entry: Empowering Young People for a Barrier-Free Community
Members implement disability advocacy, education and capability building. employment assistance and community development programs to enable the differently-abled to live independently as well as have them, together with the rest of the members of the community understand and empathize with each other.

the finalists

* ANDUYOG YOUTH VOLUNTEERS MOVEMENT *Tabang sa Tugang* * STUDENT VOLUNTEERS ASSOCIATION-LA SALETTE PANANAGUTAN CENTER *Integrated Comprehensive Community Program* * WILDFIRE YOUTH MINISTRY *The Manifesto Movement* * UP AN BALANGAW PERFORMING ARTS GROUP *Panarit Ug Pastores* * UP TSINELAS *Pagbansay* * XAVIER UNIVERSITY *STREAMS' Academic Enrichment Program* * YOUTH COMMUNITY SERVICE CLUB *Summer Practicum Outreach* Program * ATENEO SPECIAL EDUCATION SOCIETY *Saturday Specials* * YOUNG EDUCATORS SOCIETY OF MAPULANG LUPA *Summer YESkwela nina Ate at Kuya* * YOUTH 111 *Upgrade* *

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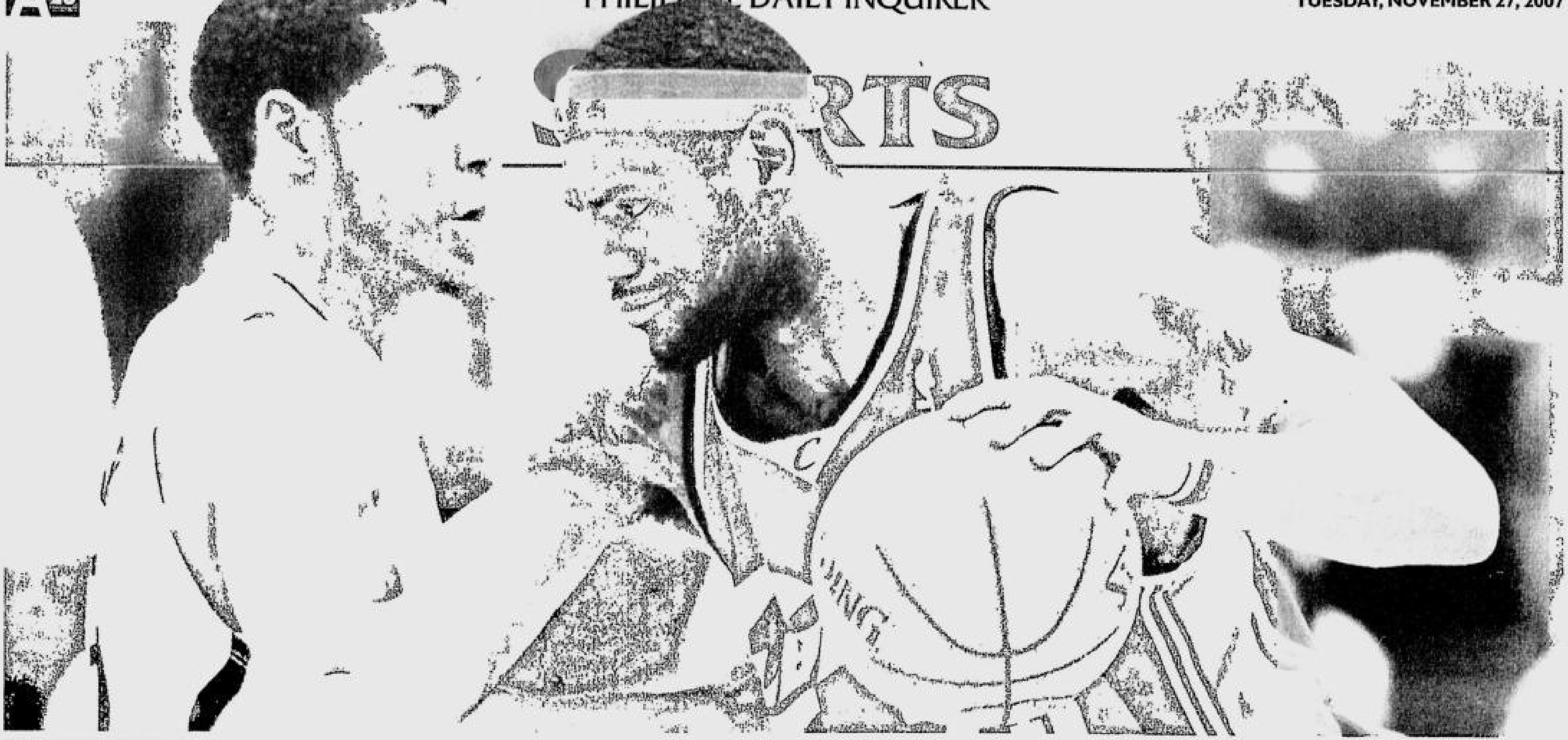


KING JAMES STRIKES AGAIN: Cleveland Cavaliers forward LeBron James (right) drives around Indiana Pacers forward Danny Granger on his way to yet another triple-double performance. REUTERS

LeBron does it all in Cavs victory

Boozer, Williams shine as Jazz end home winning streak of Pistons

INDIANAPOLIS—LEBRON JAMES HAD his fourth triple-double of the season, and the Cleveland Cavaliers beat the Indiana Pacers, 111-106, Sunday for their third straight win.

The National Basketball Association's leading scorer finished with 30 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists.

It was the 14th time he had double figures in three statistical categories in his NBA career and his second straight after registering 37 points, 12 rebounds and 12 assists in Cleveland's 111-108 victory over the Toronto Raptors Saturday.

Drew Gooden had 23 points and 12 rebounds, and Sasha Pavlovic added 22 points and five assists for the Cavaliers.

In Auburn Hills, Michigan, Carlos Boozer had 36 points and 11 rebounds and a healthy Deron Williams added 21 points and 14 assists to help the Utah Jazz end the Detroit Pistons' perfect home run with a 103-93 victory on Sunday.

GAME TODAY (*Basketball TV*)
11:30 a.m.—Houston vs LA Clippers (replay at 9 p.m.)

The Pistons had won four straight at home before being held to 39.5 percent shooting by the Jazz.

With Rasheed Wallace injured, the Pistons had no one to contain Boozer, who was a stunning 17 of 20 from the floor.

"You could see how much quicker he was, how much crisper his passes were, his shot," Boozer said of WIlliams.

Williams, fit to play for the first time in weeks after having an ingrown toenail removed, connected on six of 13 field-goal attempts and eight of 10 free throws to go with his double-figure assists.

"He just seemed like a different player out there than the last like five or six games," Boozer added.

Boozer showed why, scoring 14 points in the second quarter—two less than the Pistons did as a team—when the Jazz took a 57-50 lead, closing with a 20-7 run.

Williams had seven of his 10 first-half assists in the deciding second period.

"We wanted to just push the tempo," Williams said. "This is a team that we feel like we can run against. They like to slow it down, like to beat you up. We tried to push it against them a little bit, get some easy shots, easy layups, get our confidence going."

In Seattle, Tim Duncan scored 26 points and San Antonio scored the first 12 points of the third quarter to break away for a 116-101 win over the SuperSonics.

Manu Ginobili and Tony Parker each scored 22 for the Spurs, who at 12-2 are off to their best start after 14 games in team history—one game better than last season.

Reserve Wally Szczerbiak scored 27, including a season-high 20 for the Sonics in the second quarter, and Kevin Durant ended a shooting slump with 25 on 11-for-15 shooting for Seattle, which matched its worst start since its inaugural season of 1967-68. The Sonics are 0-6 at KeyArena, their worst home start ever.

At Los Angeles, Jason Kidd had 15 points and 14 assists to help New Jersey overcome Kobe Bryant's 31 points and beat the Lakers, 102-100.

Richard Jefferson had 27 points for the Nets, who have won three straight following a six-game losing streak. Vince Carter had 19 points in a reserve role and Bostjan Nachbar scored nine of his 15 points in the fourth quarter.

Bryant, Kidd's teammate on the US national team, made 15 straight free throws before missing a clutch foul shot with 6.1 seconds to go.

AP, Reuters

Beckham still wants to play for England

SYDNEY—DAVID BECKHAM SAYS HE IS eager to help England qualify for the 2010 World Cup and claim his 100th international cap.

The 32-year-old former England captain, here to appear for his US club LA Galaxy in an exhibition match on Tuesday, believes he has the experience and passion to play on for his country.

"I want to go on and I believe that I can," Beckham said Monday. "I believe that I've got the experience and the passion still to play for my country.

"I hope when the next manager comes in he will give me that chance, but we'll have to wait and see."

Beckham set up one of England's goals in last week's 3-2 European championship qualifier loss to Croatia which wasn't enough to save England's skin, or that of manager Steve McClaren, who was promptly sacked.

Beckham, however, considers his England days far from over and his international thoughts have turned to the looming qualifiers for the 2010 World Cup.

"We've got to go in with a positive frame of mind," he said.

AFP

TAKEO Spikes of the Philadelphia Eagles tackles Kevin Faulk (top) of the New England Patriots. AFP

Patriots keep slate clean

BOSTON—THE UNBEATEN NEW England Patriots rallied in the fourth quarter to beat the Philadelphia Eagles, 31-28, and celebrate wrapping up their divisional title on Sunday.

Laurence Maroney scored on a four-yard run to put the Patriots (11-0) in the lead with 7:20 to play, and Asante Samuel made his second interception of the game minutes later as New England continued its bid to become the first NFL team since the 1972 Miami Dolphins to go undefeated in a regular season.

The Patriots, who had already clinched the AFC East title when the Buffalo Bills were beaten 36-14 by Jacksonville, were almost upset when the Eagles, sparked by quarterback AJ Feeley and an aggressive defense, led 28-24 before Maroney scored.

The Eagles made one more bid, driving to the New England 29 and to within range of a tying field goal but Samuel sealed the win with his interception of Feeley's pass.

"It was not surprising," Samuel said when asked about the Eagles, who were without injured starting quarterback Donovan McNabb. "They have a great, West Coast offense and we played terrible."

Reuters

US sprinter, Ethiopian lung-buster get awards

MONTE CARLO, MONACO—World champion sprinter Tyson Gay and middle-distance runner Meseret Defar won World Athlete of the Year awards on Sunday.

Gay won the 100 and 200 meters at the world championships in Osaka, Japan, and was part of the victorious 400 relay team. That made him the fourth man to win three golds at a single worlds.

"To follow in Carl Lewis' footsteps is just a great honor," said Gay, referring to the first man to win the award in 1988. "I honestly think that I need to have the world record like some of the other great sprinters like Carl Lewis, Maurice Greene. I think that sets you apart."

The 25-year-old Gay also won the Jesse Owens Award earlier this month as the outstanding men's track athlete in the United States for 2007.

Defar set the two-mile world record at the Van Damme Memorial meet on Sept. 14, smashing her own mark by almost 12 seconds. The Ethiopian finished in 8 minutes, 58.58 seconds.

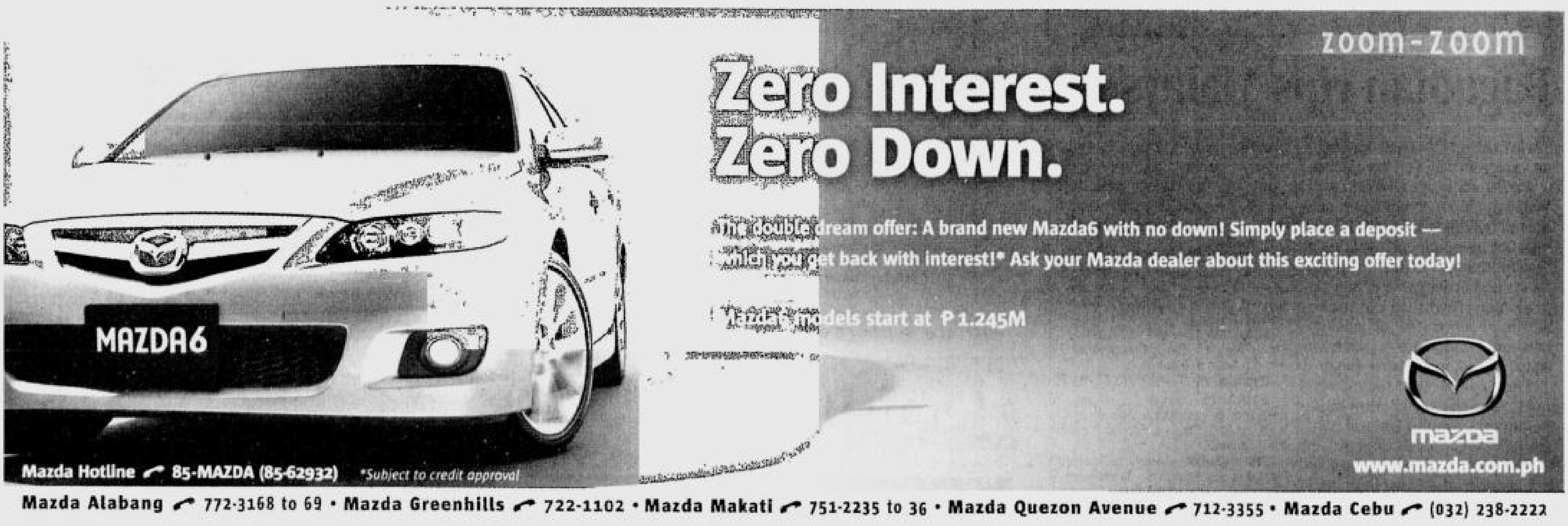
The 23-year-old Defar also set world records in the 5,000 and the indoor 3,000 earlier in the season, and won the 5,000 at the Aug. 25-Sept. 2 worlds in Osaka, Japan.

"I don't have words to describe how happy I am," said Defar, who won all her races this season. "This is very special for Ethiopian women. Those who struggle very hard and who don't have very many opportunities to achieve the highest levels of athletics."

Jamaican Asafa Powell won men's performance of the year for his world-record time of 9.74 seconds in the 100 meters, set in Italy, in September.

High jump world champion Blanka Vlasic of Croatia won the women's award by clearing 2.07 meters in Stockholm, Sweden, coming closer to the 2.09-meter mark that has stood for two decades.

AP



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Q3 GDP growth seen at 6.1-7.1%

In '08, peso seen to reach 38 to a dollar

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE COUNTRY'S SECOND BIGGEST LENder Banco de Oro—EPCI expects the peso to appreciate to as much as 38:$1 next year on strong overseas remittances, weaker US dollar and improved Philippine macroeconomic fundamentals.

In his macroeconomic outlook for 2008, BDO chief strategist Jonathan Ravelas said that the foreign exchange market however would likely remain volatile and, given the local peso's strong performance, a correction may be forthcoming.

Ravelas projected that any pullback for next year would be limited to 46:$1.

"Strong OFW (overseas Filipino workers) remittances, along with portfolio flows, will help keep the currency on the stronger side," Ravelas said. "But the currency will remain volatile amid economic stability."

Ravelas said the government's healthier fiscal position and the country's sustained growth performance would nevertheless support the local currency.

From a high of 5.3 percent in 2002, the government's fiscal deficit-to-GDP (gross domestic product) ratio has slid to 1.1 percent as of end-2006.

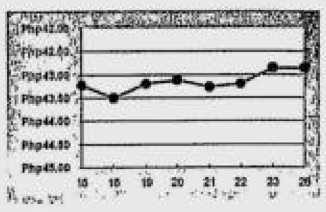
"A balanced budget seems to be the order in 2008," Ravelas said, citing the government's target to wipe out the deficit by next year.

But he added that a sovereign credit rating upgrade would not be likely, given uncertain-

IN '08/ B3

INDICATORS

CURRENCIES



NOVEMBER

PESO-DOLLAR RATE

P 42.86 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Nov. 26, 2007

Y 108.18 = $1

As of 5 p.m., Nov. 23, 2007

GOLD: $824.60-825.10

per ounce Hong Kong, Nov. 26, 2007

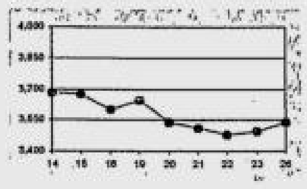
STOCK MARKET

Shares up 1.2%

SHARE PRICES yesterday closed 1.2 percent higher as bargain-hunters took their cue from Wall Street's rebound on Friday amid a strong start to the US holiday shopping season, dealers said.

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX

NOVEMBER



(See stock market report on Page B4)

The composite index added 42.85 points to 3,537.29, off a high of 3,556.78.

The broader all-share index rose 29.14 points to 2,156.85.

SHARES/ B2

Neda: '07 growth may be RP's strongest in 30 years

By Michelle V. Remo

THE COUNTRY'S ECONOMY MAY HAVE EXPANDed in the third quarter by as much as 7.1 percent from a year earlier, setting it on course for its strongest growth in over three decades this year, the National Economic and Development Authority said yesterday.

Augusto Santos, acting director general of the Neda, yesterday told reporters that third quarter growth could come in between 6.1 and 7.1 percent.

If the country's gross domestic product were to hit 7 percent in the July-Sept period from a year earlier, the full-year performance would likely be 7 percent—the country's strongest performance since 1976.

Also, an investment bank based in the United States expects the Philippine economy to grow to 8 percent by 2009 assuming that the country sustains its structural reforms.

In its global weekly monitor dated Nov. 23, Lehman Brothers expressed optimism that the country could even top this year's economic performance.

According to Santos, strong production from the agriculture sector and increasing income from the services sector are but some of the factors that would help pull economic growth to a

Q3 GDP/ B5

IN THIS ISSUE
▨ **Tax amnesty** scheme covers unpaid estate taxes /B2
▨ **Ayala** raises P6B through 5-year peso bond float /B4
▨ **Asia** shares rebound on US retail hopes; yen up /B5

Small borrowers in limbo as NHMFC wash off hands

By Daxim L. Lucas

(Conclusion)

SPECIAL REPORT

IT IS NO EXAGGERATION TO SAY that the Special Purpose Vehicle Act has breathed new life into the local financial system by allowing lenders to unburden themselves of billions of pesos worth of bad loans.

The rush to clean up nonperforming assets, however, has affected small borrowers like Alex Maravilla, and at least two other employees of Sunvar Development Corp., who woke up one day to find that their government housing loans have been sold to Bahay Financial Services (BFS), a firm they had never dealt with in the past.

"We don't even know who they are," Maravilla said in an interview. "Suddenly, they wanted to foreclose our home."

According to the National Home Mortgage and Finance Corp. (NHMFC), it sold off P13 billion worth of housing loans to private entities Balikatan Housing Finance Inc. and its service provider BFS, as part of an effort to put its financial house in order, as well as to spur the creation of a secondary market for mortgages.

"Part of our mandate is to help develop securitization [of loans] in the country," said the agency's president Joseph Peter S. Sison.

Maravilla's loan, he said, was likely part of the 52,000 accounts transferred to BFS.

TITLE/ B0

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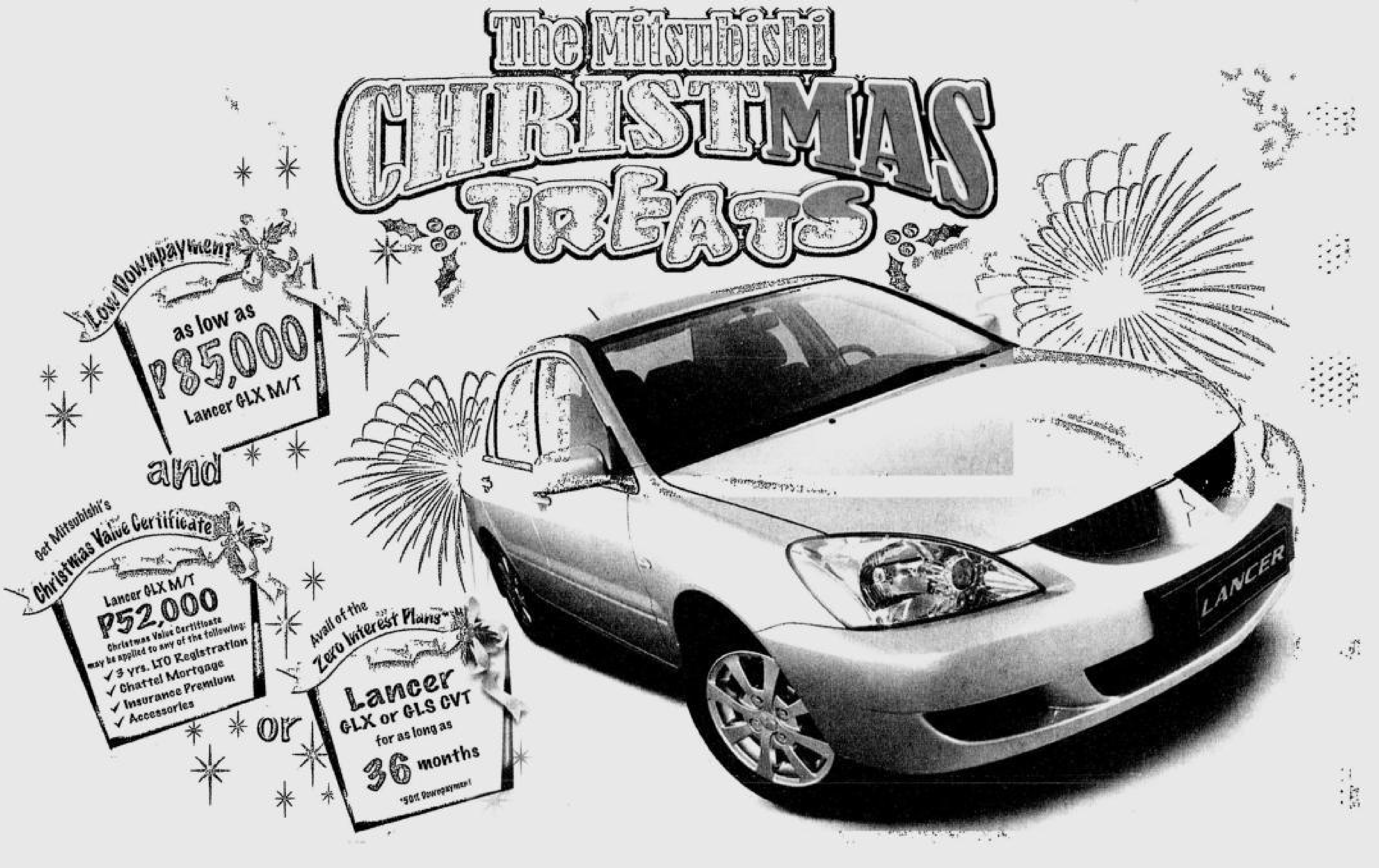
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Tax amnesty scheme covers unpaid estate taxes

Law covers all unpaid taxes in past years up to '05

By Michelle V. Remo

THE BUREAU OF INTERNAL REVENUE has issued a circular clarifying that unpaid estate taxes are covered by the ongoing Tax Amnesty Program.

Revenue Memorandum Circular No. 29-07 was issued amid confusion among taxpayers on whether estate taxes were covered by the program.

The Tax Amnesty Law and its implementing rules and regulations—which are both clear in covering income, value-added and other major taxes—are silent on whether individuals who have unpaid estate taxes may apply for amnesty.

Revenue officials, however, have stated in the past that the Tax Amnesty Law encompassed all unpaid taxes in previous years up to 2005.

Estate tax is charged on individuals who automatically inherit real property as a result of death of the original owner of the said property.

HEFTI

The BIR said in a statement that the property's fair market value at the time of death of the original owner, and not the value in 2005, would be considered in computing the net worth, which would be the basis in computing the 5-percent amnesty tax.

According to the BIR, "net worth" is the difference between the assets and liabilities of the original owner of the property.

In the same circular, the BIR also said that individuals who have deficiency in the payment of taxes on one-time transactions—such as capital gains tax and documentary stamp tax on sale of real property—could also apply for amnesty.

The BIR clarified, however, that individuals qualified for amnesty were only those who were short on their tax payment. This means that those who did not at all pay any tax on the sale of real property are disqualified from the amnesty program.

In the case of deficient taxes on sale of real property, the 5-percent amnesty tax will be computed based on the "increase" in the individual's net worth, and not directly on the net worth.

Revenue Commissioner Lilian Hefti made an appeal to concerned individuals to avail themselves of the tax amnesty so they could have a worry-free holiday season and start with a clean slate next year.

The Tax Amnesty Law, passed by both Houses of Congress last Feb. 7, prohibits the implementation of another tax amnesty program after the current one lapses.

This provision is to let the public know that the government will no longer offer amnesty programs in the future. It is intended to discourage the people from not paying their taxes correctly.

The law gives immunity to qualified applicants from prosecution. Applicants need to pay an amnesty tax of 5 percent (either of net worth or increase in net worth) or other prescribed amounts, whichever is higher. The prescribed amounts are based on the types of taxpayers and their capitalization (for corporations).

BIR officials and Congressman Danilo Suarez, author of the Tax Amnesty Law, have been conducting roadshows nationwide to invite concerned taxpayers to avail themselves of the amnesty.

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Justice on call

BREAKTIME

Conrado R. Banal III

OKAY, SOME 50 INDIVIDUAL INDEED ARE marching from Bukidnon all the way to Malacañang.

Reports say that they are actually "farmers," who are demanding that this administration award to them a 144-hectare property in Sumilao town in that province under the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program. You know, that same CARP!

Nobody can doubt that the protest march makes for good media mileage.

From where I sit, however, the whole thing smacks of "emotional blackmail," similar to what the wife carries out when she does not get what she wants!

It seems that the "farmers" are resorting to this dramatic march, complete with media coverage and all that jazz, because the Supreme Court many years ago ruled—with finality—that those 144 hectares were exempted from land reform.

In other words, it is not really about "justice," as media would want to call the dramatic protest march.

The Supreme Court already ruled on the case, right? When it comes to justice, you cannot go any higher than that!

The property actually belongs to the Quisumbing family of Cebu who, in turn, bought it from the Carlos family some 30 years ago.

The Quisumbing group then leased it to Philippine Packing Corp., otherwise known as "Del Monte." When the lease expired about 10 years ago, the group then got the CARP exemption by converting it into agro-industrial use.

The Supreme Court noted that the supposed "farmers" were not even tenants of n the property, and that they were only seasonal workers in the pineapple plantation of Del Monte when the property was leased to the company.

Eligible beneficiaries under the land reform program, according to the court ruling, are "tenants" and "farmers" and "regular farmworkers" who are landless.

Now, according to reports, some of the leaders of the march from Bukidnon to Malacañang are beneficiaries of CARP, based on records of the Department of Agrarian Reform.

Hmmm! Do you think that they still want more?

* * *

CLT Realty Development Corp. (CLT) sent the following statement on the Maysilo estate issue that pits the company against Manotok Realty Inc. and Araneta Institute of Agriculture. The issue is with the Supreme Court because of the petition of Manotok and Araneta to reverse the court's earlier decision favoring CLT.

"While CLT Realty refrained from publishing or causing to be published in media the circumstances pertaining to the pending case and instead stood firm in its faith of having its case decided in the proper forum at all levels and patiently waited for the wheels of justice to take their course, it is forced to break its silence to defend its position on the issue.

"The fact is that the decision of the SC in November 2005 in favor of CLT Realty is merely an affirmation of three separate decisions of the Court of Appeals which in turn affirmed three separate decisions of the trial courts rendered after trial on the merits dating as far back as two decades ago. The campaign of Manotok and Araneta subverts the entire 20-year legal process that has taken place wherein the land title to Maysilo of the two petitioners were voided by the decisions of the SC, Court of Appeals and trial courts. Trying the cases all over again by asking the Supreme Court to remand the cases to the lower courts for another full-blown trial is unjust.

"A remand perpetuates injustice since it will result in a re-litigation of issues already settled through long protracted trials in all cases, which litigation spanned a period of more than two decades. A re-trial is highly improper because all the parties presented all their evidence before the trial courts already, after which the trial courts concluded that the titles of Manotok and Araneta are void. A re-trial sets a very dangerous precedent [for] every losing litigant going to the Supreme Court asking that its case be tried again and again even after decades of lengthy litigation wherein it already presented its evidence in full.

"CLT also wants to clarify the following points:

"The subject matter of the three pending cases is not 300 hectares. The Araneta-Dimson case involves 50 hectares, the Manotok-CLT Realty case involves 20 hectares and the Sto. Niño-CLT Realty case involves three hectares. The total area of CLT Realty's property is only 80 hectares.

"CLT Realty is not claiming the North Luzon Expressway (NLEx). It is only claiming that portion recently expropriated by the Toll Regulatory Board for the expansion of the NLEx's toll booths which involves an area of less than three (3) hectares.

"No government land is involved in these cases. The intervention of the Republic of the Philippines is premised on its alleged interest to protect the Torren System. In fact, the intervention of the Republic was opposed precisely on the ground that only private lands are involved and that it has no cause of action or prayer for reversion of the lands to the State.

"The alleged fabrication of Dimson's title is based on a report of the Land Registration Authority (LRA) which has already been struck down by the Supreme Court in Heirs of Luis Gonzaga vs. Court of Appeals, 261 SCRA 327.

"In the Gonzaga case, the Supreme Court declared the report inherently inadmissible and incompetent, hence, cannot be given weight or probative. The Supreme Court also stressed therein that said report suffers from congenital infirmity as it could not have possibly overruled the final decisions of the various branches of the then Courts of First Instance of Rizal."

Nido data gathering in Palawan delayed due to bad weather

By Abigail L. Ho

THE PERSISTENCE OF BAD WEATHER in Palawan has prompted Australia-based Nido Petroleum Ltd. to suspend for a few days its acquisition of seismic data for two service contract areas.

In a disclosure to the Australian Stock Exchange, Nido managing director David Whitby said the acquisition of seismic data on Service Contracts 58 and 63 would resume when the weather clears.

The company, however, was still on track to completing its seismic campaign, the largest in its history, by end-January, he said.

For SC 58, Nido is using the MV Pacific Titan to gather 661 square kilometers of 3D and 2,350 kilometers of 2D seismic over the Northwest Palawan contract area.

As of Nov. 19, the survey was already 31 percent complete and would be finished by end-January 2008, subject to the weather condition, Whitby said.

The survey started on Nov. 1.

The survey on SC 63, which PNOC Exploration Corp. operates and in which Nido has a stake, would likely be completed by the end of this month.

As of Nov. 23, the survey was 63 percent complete.

The first part of Nido's massive seismic campaign, the one on SC 54, was completed on Oct. 30. Processing of the 165 square kilometers of new 3D seismic data was currently being processed by CGGVeritas in Singapore, Whitby said.

"The 2007 seismic program is multifaceted, with SC 54 and SC 58 focused on delivering a drilling portfolio through 3D acquisition over five high-graded areas. In SC 63, the objective is to accelerate the 2D seismic program in order to bring this large block to a level of maturity similar to SC 54 and SC 58 as quickly as possible," Nido head of exploration Jon Pattillo had earlier said.

"On completion of our 2007 program and within the space of about 12 months, Nido will have covered the majority of its exploration acreage with an extensive grid of high quality 3D and 2D seismic data on which to build the company's prospect and lead portfolio," he added.

Shares up 1.2%

There were 80 advancers and 23 decliners, while 50 stocks were steady.

A total of 2.7 billion shares worth P3.8 billion changed hands.

"It seems foreign investors are back and nibbling at discounted share prices," said Nestor Aguila of DA Market Securities. "The market may resume its downtrend but, given a strong domestic economy, any weakness in prices presents a buying opportunity."

Following the composite index's 2.9 percent drop last week, valuations have become more attractive.

But there were bouts of profit-taking Monday, indicating that investors are still treading cautiously.

"By now, everyone is tired of hearing about the subprime woes, the credit crisis, and the apparent weakness of the US economy," said Prince Yeung of AB Capital Securities.

"However, the sad reality is that these issues will persist," he added. *AFP*

In '08 peso ...

From page B1

ties on the government's revenue flows outside of large privatization initiatives.

Nevertheless, the greater leeway on the fiscal front is seen to support the country's growth momentum.

"The 2007 economic numbers corroborates the picture of robust economic expansion," Ravelas said.

Given the expected global economic slowdown next year, Ravelas sees the country's GDP growth to soften to 6 to -6.5 percent, but still better ,than the historical average over the years.

In the past few years, the country's growth was locked within a 5 to 6 percent range. But the country's GDP grew to 7.3 percent in the first half of 2007—its strongest performance in 20 years.

GDP, the most important indicator of economic output, refers to the total amount of goods and services produced by the economy in a given period.

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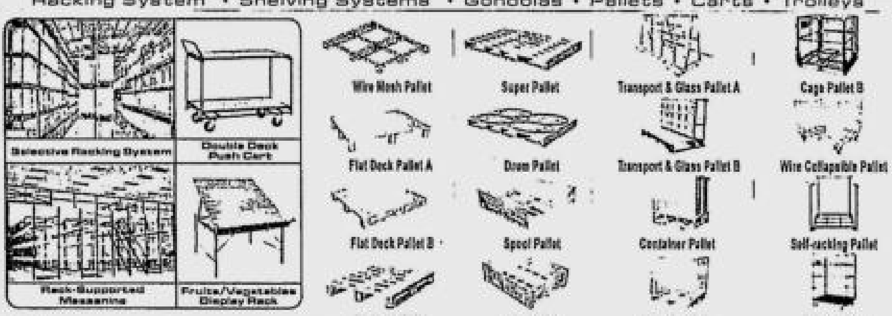

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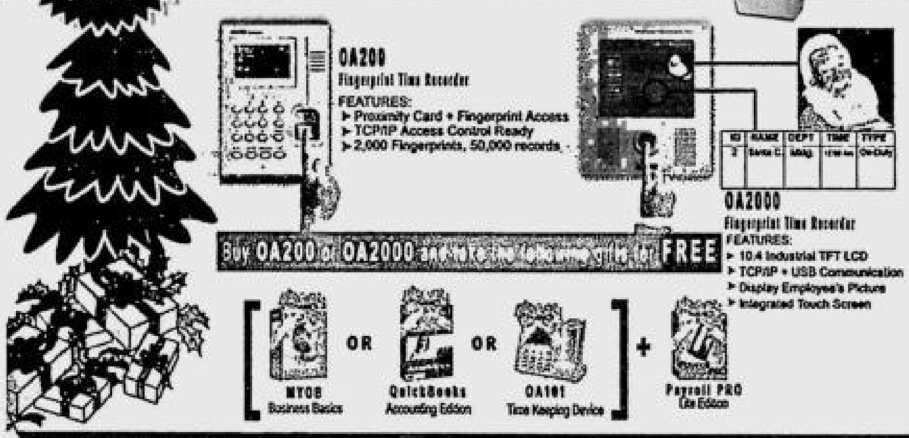

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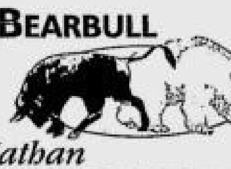
Slowdown or recession?

MR. BEARBULL



Ron Nathan

I HAVE BEEN THROUGH THE most painful three weeks of my life. I awoke at 2 a.m. one night with an intense stabbing pain in my left side and another at the top of my left leg. I had to call the doctor for painkillers and I have been taking them ever since, which is not good. Blood tests revealed nothing so I went to physiotherapy three times a week but with no significant beneficial results so far. I still cannot raise my left leg, get out of bed unaided or put my socks on. I can only walk slowly and with considerable difficulty.

Last Friday, the doctor took me to the hospital for an MRI scan and the results have been forwarded to a specialist. It is impossible to believe that such a thing can occur out of the blue. This usually happens only to old people. If the scan is bad, the surgeon intends to perform the world's first "spinalectomy," removing my spinal column and replacing it with my Bearbull column. What after-effects I might suffer, the surgeon cannot ex-spleen. If I am not at work, I still have a skeleton staff, Maricor.

I saw an advertisement over and over again about a car, which hugs the road at incredible speed even when taking sharp curves so that you feel one with the car. I rushed out and bought a Mercedes C class and set off on the C5, I drove at 160 kph and took a curve at that speed. Unfortunately, I lost control of the car and hit a tree. I was saved by the air bag and my seat belt but I discovered something. The Mercedes bends.

In answer to several queries, Fred Claus is not the son of Santa Claus. He is merely a subordinate clause.

When a baby is born, if it doesn't cry immediately the doctor slaps its bottom to make it breathe. When my brother was born, he was so ugly that the doctor slapped my mother.

* * *

Last Thursday, President Bush sent Iraq another 50 tanks so the market was closed for Tanks Giving. On Friday, it rallied on low volume because the market was open only half day. The bad news continues and Freddie Mac and Fannie Mae, the government-sponsored enterprises that help provide financing to the mortgage market, both announced big losses and their shares fell by up to 30 percent. Freddie Mac might have to cut its dividend due to concerns about its capital. Initially, it was thought that subprime mortgages might reach $100 billion, now the consensus is $200-$300 billion spread over two years.

House prices are still falling, together with demand, as the Fed tightens terms and reduces the availability of sub-prime and jumbo mortgages. The United States is passing through the worst housing recession in 16 years and the chief economist at Moody's said, "The economy is on the brink of a recession." Not everybody shares his view but the futures market is betting 92 percent on a quarter-point cut and 8 percent on a half-point cut. It is known that Bernanke does not want to cut rates in December especially with the oil price now close to $100 a barrel, which is inflationary. Most commentators feel that he should forget about inflation in 2008 and concentrate on growth. He certainly has to make a difficult decision next month.

The Fed decided to provide the public with more information including the individual views of the members of the Fed and also a three-year growth forecast but he will not reveal the inflation target. For next year, he has reduced the range from 2.5- 2.75 percent to 1.8- 2.5 percent. About 2.5 percent is also forecast for 2009 and 2010. Most analysts are seizing on the low end of 1.8 percent and forecasting correctly that the fourth quarter will contain a kitchen sink of charges and write-downs related to the mortgage meltdown. Next year, it is expected to be more of the same.

On the other hand, the economy is still growing, albeit at a slower pace but I doubt if we will have the usual Christmas rally. Further cuts in interest rates will weaken an already pathetic dollar, and the Middle East countries and China have been threatening to withdraw all their trillions of dollars invested in treasury bills and invest elsewhere. But where could they invest it? The euro is at a record high and even with the pound, they could not possibly absorb such a large sum. So I think it is a big bluff. Actually, the weak dollar stimulates exports and last month's trade deficit with China was reduced because of booming exports. I believe that the US will cut interest rates next year and continue to promote the weak dollar.

All Asian markets follow Wall Street, and Hong Kong has been going up and down over 1000 points a day with all markets highly volatile. In an attempt to slow growth at 11.5 percent a year, China has increased the bank's reserve deposit 9 times this year and raised interest rates 5 times. So far, this has had no effect but the yuan is being allowed to appreciate slowly. China wants to move cautiously because stringent measures could cause a loss of confidence among the hundreds of millions of local investors and this might cause a collapse not only of the CSI 300 index but the whole of Asia and the commodity market. Nobody wants this to happen so nobody is complaining about China moving cautiously.

The Phisix has been declining steadily. It has broken the 50-day moving average and is only marginally above the 200-day moving average, which many technical analysts consider important. Leaders of the 10 Southeast Asian nations agreed to eliminate trade barriers for goods and services in an attempt to create a European Union-modeled economic community by 2015. This excludes China and India as they are so dominating in size but it would still have a population of 570 million and a GDP of $1 trillion.

FGEN and an unpronounceable Icelandic company won the PNOC-EDC stake with a bid much higher than its competitors. SMC slid to a 5-year low and FPH has been in free fall from P88.50 to P58.50 in only five weeks. T opened and closed at P10, roughly its IPO price. Splash dropped from P9 to P7.40 in only seven days but the fall seems overdone, as the P/E is only 12, low for a growth stock. Foreign brokers continued to sell an average of P500 million worth of our stocks every day but sold P800 million on Thursday and Friday. Record remittances are holding up the peso. Yesterday, there were small net buyers.

I just received the doctor's report on the MRI. There is no abnormality of the spine and it is not impinging on any nerve. Basically, it is a combination of old age and excessive sex. I have to reduce this to twice a day and avoid complicated positions involving swinging from the chandelier.

Ayala raises P6B through 5-year peso bond float

Demand strong despite tight pricing, says exec

By Elizabeth S. Lacson

AYALA CORP. HAS RAISED P6 billion from a recently concluded five-year peso bond float. The amount is P1 billion more than the offer size of P5 billion.

Ayala got the Securities and Exchange Commission's approval for the issuance of P5 billion worth of fixed rate bonds, with an option to increase the size to P8 billion.

"The company decided to upsize the offering by P1 billion, which was less than its maximum approved size, in view of the tight pricing that it wanted to achieve consistent with the way Ayala Corp. has been positioning its deals in the market," Ayala managing director and treasurer Ramon Opulencia said in a telephone interview.

"Demand for the bonds was strong and this was in spite of the very tight pricing that we adopted for the issue," Opulencia said.

The five-year bonds were priced at a coupon rate of 6.825 percent, which was lower than its competition in the market.

Ayala tapped the following to underwrite the offer: BPI Capital Corp., BDO Capital & Investment Corp., First Metro Investment Corp., ING Bank NV, Land Bank of the Philippines and Standard Chartered Bank.

Over the years, Ayala has shifted its debt mix to 81 percent in pesos and 19 percent in US dollars, from 10 percent in pesos and 90 percent in US dollars in the past.

Del Monte Pacific buys S&W brand

DEL MONTE PACIFIC LTD., THE GROUP that owns the Del Monte fruit brand in the Philippines, said it had acquired American processed fruits and vegetables brand S&W from New York-listed Del Monte Foods for $10 million.

Del Monte Pacific and its subsidiaries are not affiliates of Del Monte Corp. and its parent, Del Monte Foods.

In a statement sent to the Singapore stock exchange, Del Monte Pacific said it had acquired the S&W brand in all of its markets, except North and South America, Australia and New Zealand.

S&W's main market for canned fruits and vegetables is the United States but it is also strong in Japan, Hong Kong, Thailand and Singapore.

Del Monte Pacific also said it was acquiring S&W inventories and distribution rights.

As part of the deal, Del Monte Pacific will grant Del Monte Foods a "perpetual royalty-free license"—which will allow a company to use the brand—for S&W canned fruits and vegetables, and certain specific bottled products for the Western European market.

The S&W brand originated in the United States in 1896 as a producer of premium quality processed fruits and vegetables. It was founded in 1896 by three wholesalers from San Francisco—Samuel Sussman, Gustav Wormser and Samuel Wormser.

Del Monte Pacific, on the other hand, is 80-percent held by NutriAsia Pacific Ltd. (NPL), owned by the Campos-controlled NutriAsia Group of Companies.

The NutriAsia Group is the market leader in the liquid condiments sector. Its flagship brand, UFC, holds an 85-percent share in the local ketchup and hot chili sauce market. *Elizabeth Sanchez-Lacson*

CURRENCIES

November 26, 2007 Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Dollar Equivalent	Peso Equivalent
United States	Dollar	0.673945	1.000000	43.0570
Japan	Yen	0.006218	0.009226	0.3972
United Kingdom	Pound	1.389069	2.061100	88.7448
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.086648	0.128568	5.5358
Switzerland	Franc	0.611454	0.907276	39.0646
Canada	Dollar	0.681166	1.010714	43.5183
Singapore	Dollar	0.467725	0.694011	29.8820
Australia	Dollar	0.587470	0.871688	37.5323
Bahrain	Dinar*	1.799587	2.670227	114.9720
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.181902	0.269906	11.6213
Brunei	Dollar	0.466108	0.691611	29.7787
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000072	0.000107	0.0046
Thailand	Baht	0.021698	0.032196	1.3863
UAE	Dirham	0.183882	0.272844	11.7478
EU	Euro	1.000000	1.483800	63.8880
Korea	Won	0.000724	0.001075	0.0463
China	Yuan**	0.091000	0.135026	5.8138
Denmark	Kroner	0.134185	0.199104	8.5728
India	Rupee	0.016998	0.025221	1.0859
Malaysia	Ringgit	0.200669	0.297752	12.8203
New Zealand	Dollar	0.507336	0.752785	32.4127
Sweden	Kroner	0.107747	0.159875	6.8837
Taiwan	Nt Dollar	0.020853	0.030941	1.3322

Source: Reuters' forex closing prices as of NY time—Nov. 23, 2007

* Various banks in Bahrain as quoted in Reuters' Screen.

** Asian time closing rate as of Nov. 23, 2007

PHILIPPINE STOCK EXCHANGE

(As of November 26, 2007)

52-WKS HIGH	52-WKS LOW	STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
		BANKS					
73	43	Banco de Oro-EPCI Inc.	53.5	54	53	53.5	761,500
73.5	53	Bank of the Philippine Islands	63	63	62	62	610,000
748	544	China Banking Corp.	680	680	670	670	1,600
23.5	14	Citystate Savings Bank	23	23	23	23	300
0.63	0.36	Export and Industry Bank Inc.	0.39	0.39	0.39	0.39	150,000
75.5	47.5	Metropolitan Bank and Trust Company	53	55.5	53	54.5	5,158,100
65.5	39	Philippine National Bank	42.5	43	42.5	42.5	121,400
68	46	Philippine Savings Bank	62	62	62	62	500
39.57	20	Rizal Commercial Banking Corp.	24	24.25	24	24.25	134,200
90	61	Security Bank Corp.	69	69	68	68	13,500
66	42	Union Bank of the Philippines	43.5	44	43.5	44	45,300
		OTHER FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS					
5.6	1.92	ATR KimEng Financial Corp.	4	4.1	4	4.1	120,000
2.22	0.6	Bankard Inc.	1.96	2.02	1.94	1.96	3,464,000
16.25	4.6	CitisecOnline.com Inc.	11	11.75	11	11.5	1,306,200
1.6	0.5	First Abacus Financial Holdings Corp.	0.96	0.96	0.96	0.96	100,000
42.5	29	First Metro Investment Corp.	42	42	42	42	500
5.9	4.8	I-Remit Inc.	5.3	5.3	5.1	5.1	1,383,000
1,970.00	1,590.00	Manulife Financial Corp.	1,670.00	1,690.00	1,670.00	1,690.00	690
5	2.7	National Reinsurance Corp. of the Phils.	2.85	3.05	2.85	2.95	1,462,000
3.1	1.32	PCI Leasing and Finance Inc.	1.92	1.92	1.92	1.92	2,000
1,360.00	260	The Philippine Stock Exchange Inc.	1,090.00	1,090.00	1,070.00	1,070.00	1,490
2,500.00	1,970.00	Sun Life Financial Inc.	2,215.00	2,225.00	2,215.00	2,220.00	970
1.94	1.3	Vantage Corp.	1.46	1.46	1.46	1.46	50,000
		ELECTRICITY, ENERGY, POWER & WATER					
6.2	3.8	Aboitiz Power Corp.	4.85	4.85	4.75	4.8	2,297,000
70.5	49	First Gen Corp.	60.5	60.5	59.5	59.5	1,639,100
92	51	First Phil. Holdings Corp.	61	62	61	61	2,431,000
17.5	8.8	Manila Water Company Inc.	16.25	16.5	16	16.25	4,244,300
105.45	27.73	Manila Electric Company	71	71	70	70	2,964,700
7.8	4.1	PNOC Energy Development Corp.	7	7.1	6.9	7	51,995,000
7.4	3.95	Petron Corp.	5.8	5.9	5.7	5.9	3,781,000
14.75	6.4	Phoenix Petroleum Philippines Inc.	7	7	7	7	24,000
2.04	0.91	Trans-Asia Oil and Energy Dev't Corp.	1.36	1.38	1.3	1.3	1,633,000
		FOOD, BEVERAGE & TOBACCO					
6.3	3.4	Alaska Milk Corp.	4.95	4.95	4.9	4.95	844,000
2.32	1.48	Alliance Tuna International Inc.	1.66	1.66	1.5	1.54	1,413,000
61	39	Jollibee Foods Corp.	48	48.5	48	48	95,100
0.98	0.5	RFM Corp.	0.69	0.72	0.69	0.7	710,000
3.3	2.06	Roxas Holdings	2.75	2.8	2.75	2.8	1,031,000
80	42.5	San Miguel Corp. A	42.5	44	42.5	44	1,124,100
88	43	San Miguel Corp. B	44.5	49.5	44.5	46	595,800
20.75	13.5	Universal Robina Corp.	14	14	14	14	612,300
0.55	0.24	Vitarich Corp.	0.34	0.34	0.34	0.34	50,000
		CONSTRUCTION, INFRASTRUCTURE & ALLIED SERVICES					
6.1	2.65	EEI Corp.	4.5	4.7	4.5	4.7	341,000
2	0.81	Southeast Asia Cement Holdings Inc.	0.95	0.97	0.95	0.96	4,140,000
21	1	TKC Steel Corp.	10	10	9.7	10	5,485,000
		CHEMICALS					
6.3	3.75	Chemrez Technologies Inc.	4.15	4.3	4.15	4.3	179,000
1.4	0.61	Interphil Laboratories Inc. B	1	1	1	1	50,000
1.46	0.51	Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.87	0.87	0.86	0.86	60,000
		DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS					
0.75	0.17	Picop Resources Inc.	0.36	0.37	0.36	0.36	9,050,000
9	7.3	Splash Corp.	7.4	7.6	7.3	7.4	1,799,000
		HOLDING FIRMS					
39	18.75	ABS-CBN Hldg Corp. - Phil. Deposit Receipts	34	35	34	35	1,562,600
0.185	0.0525	AJO.net Holdings Inc.	0.12	0.125	0.12	0.125	67,780,000
1.28	0.29	APC Group Inc.	0.6	0.63	0.58	0.62	2,710,000
3.65	1.5	ATN Holdings Inc. A	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.7	6,000
3.7	1.5	ATN Holdings Inc. B	2.9	2.95	2.9	2.95	22,000
0.018	0.0075	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. A	0.0095	0.01	0.0095	0.01	56,000,000
0.019	0.0075	Abacus Cons. Res. and Hold'gs Inc. B	0.01	0.011	0.01	0.011	7,300,000
9.7	5.8	Aboitiz Equity Ventures Inc.	6.7	6.7	6.6	6.7	593,000
0.021	0.0095	Alcorn Gold Resources Corp.	0.014	0.014	0.014	0.014	59,000,000
7.3	3.5	Alliance Global Group Inc.	5.4	5.6	5.4	5.5	14,133,000
2.9	0.89	Anglo-Philippine Holdings Corp.	2.42	2.46	2.42	2.44	7,175,000
645	397.92	Ayala Corp.	555	575	560	570	427,550
5.8	1.64	Benpres Holdings Corp.	3.7	3.85	3.7	3.8	8,074,000
12	5	DMCI Holdings Inc.	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,756,000
8	3.15	Filinvest Development Corp.	6.3	6.5	6.3	6.5	120,000
3.55	1.76	House of Investments Inc.	1.9	1.9	1.9	1.9	100,000
14.5	8.6	JG Summit Holdings Inc.	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	75,500
4.7	1.42	Lodestar Investment Hldgs Corp.	4.7	4.7	4.7	4.7	48,000
0.8	0.23	MEDCO Holdings Inc.	0.57	0.57	0.45	0.5	150,000
11.5	1.5	Minerales Industrias Corp.	6.1	6.7	6.1	6.5	4,760,000
8.5	3	PAL Holdings Inc.	5.4	5.4	5.4	5.4	16,000
0.28	0.016	Pacifica Inc. A	0.22	0.225	0.21	0.21	136,050,000
0.75	0.19	Prime Orion Philippines Inc.	0.46	0.46	0.46	0.46	50,000
452.5	268.53	SM Investments Corp.	335	347.5	335	345	84,880
0.73	0.14	Sinophil Corp.	0.33	0.39	0.33	0.36	11,660,000
0.75	0.1	Wellex Industries Inc.	0.28	0.32	0.28	0.32	10,810,000
1.1	0.26	Zeus Holdings Inc.	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56	50,000
		PROPERTY					
8.9	5	Anchor Land Holdings Inc.	7.2	7.4	7.2	7.4	64,000
1.06	0.4	Araneta Properties Inc.	0.64	0.64	0.64	0.64	60,000
19.25	11.88	Ayala Land Inc.	16	16	15.75	15.75	18,494,000
1.88	1	Belle Corp.	1.18	1.2	1.18	1.2	1,401,000
4.7	3.05	Cebu Holdings Inc.	3.75	3.75	3.7	3.7	23,000
3.83	2	City and Land Developers Inc.	2	2	2	2	45,000
0.86	0.39	Crown Equities Inc.	0.59	0.59	0.59	0.59	560,000
0.83	0.24	Cyber Bay Corp.	0.34	0.36	0.34	0.36	1,380,000
0.99	0.52	Empire East Land Holdings Inc.	0.75	0.76	0.75	0.75	680,000
0.47	0.0575	Ever Gotesco Res. and Hold'gs Inc.	0.225	0.235	0.225	0.235	2,860,000
1.48	0.81	Fil-Estate Land Inc.	0.95	0.99	0.95	0.99	3,490,000
2.44	1.28	Filinvest Land Inc.	1.58	1.58	1.52	1.54	29,333,000
0.49	0.11	Gotesco Land Inc. A	0.25	0.25	0.25	0.25	90,000
1.12	0.31	MRC Allied Industries Inc.	0.45	0.46	0.45	0.46	90,000
4.6	1.86	Megaworld Corp.	3.9	3.9	3.85	3.85	10,335,000
6.4	1.5	Metro Pacific Investments Corp.	4	4	3.8	3.9	232,000
5.2	2.2	Metro Pacific Investments Corp. - Warrants	2.6	2.75	2.6	2.7	945,000
0.7	0.125	Phil. Estates Corp.	0.31	0.36	0.31	0.35	31,260,000
0.86	0.32	Philippine Realty and Holdings Corp.	0.43	0.44	0.43	0.44	460,000
23	14.5	Robinson Land Corp.	17.75	18	17.75	18	272,900
5.9	1.93	SM Development Corp.	3.95	3.95	3.95	3.95	65,000
13.5	7.6	SM Prime Holdings Inc.	11.25	11.75	11.25	11.5	21,203,400
3.25	1.5	Shang Properties Inc.	2.18	2.22	2.18	2.2	152,000
4.5	0.38	Sta. Lucia Land Inc.	2	2.2	1.96	2.04	494,000
1.34	0.46	Suntrust Home Developers Inc.	0.52	0.52	0.52	0.52	170,000
0.49	0.09	Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.24	0.245	0.24	0.245	1,200,000
7.5	3.65	Vista Land and Lifescapes Inc.	4.85	4.95	4.85	4.95	7,350,000
		MEDIA					
38.5	18.75	ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.	33	34	33	34	126,000
12	7.6	GMA Holdings Inc.	7.7	7.8	7.6	7.7	3,843,000
11.75	7.6	GMA Network Inc.	7.7	7.8	7.7	7.7	203,000
		TELECOMMUNICATIONS					
2.12	1.1	Digital Telecommunications Phils. Inc.	1.3	1.36	1.3	1.34	2,411,000
1,750.00	1,180.00	Globe Telecom Inc.	1,460.00	1,485.00	1,460.00	1,480.00	46,090
3,285.00	2,250.00	Phil. Long Distance Telephone Co.	3,020.00	3,055.00	3,005.00	3,005.00	89,770
8.1	5.5	Pilipino Telephone Corp.	7	7	7	7	295,000
		INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY					
0.39	0.17	Boulevard Holdings Inc.	0.19	0.2	0.19	0.19	2,360,000
15.5	2.1	Diversified Financial Network Inc.	15	15.5	14.75	14.75	1,558,800
11.5	2.5	IPVG Corp.	7.8	7.9	7.7	7.7	275,000
0.065	0.027	ISM Communications Corp.	0.037	0.04	0.037	0.04	30,300,000
5	1.62	Information Capital Tech. Ventures Inc.	2.9	3	2.8	3	65,000
0.32	0.05	Island Information and Technology Inc.	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	50,000
2.08	1.1	Music Semiconductors Corp.	1.36	1.38	1.36	1.36	103,000
0.0725	0.03	Philweb Corp.	0.049	0.05	0.049	0.049	59,500,000
5.8	1.64	Transpacific Broadband Group Int'l Inc.	2.5	2.7	2.5	2.65	310,000
		TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
2.14	1.14	Aboitiz Transport System Corp.	1.32	1.32	1.32	1.32	250,000
42.5	18.75	Int'l Container Terminal Services Inc.	39	41.5	39	41	2,303,600
2.16	0.93	Keppel Philippines Marine Inc.	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7	49,000
2.04	1.12	Lorenzo Shipping Corp.	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2	13,000
		HOTEL & LEISURE					
1.16	0.32	Premiere Entertainment Productions Inc.	1.04	1.06	1.04	1.04	4,292,000
1.2	0.54	Waterfront Philippines Inc.	0.82	0.83	0.81	0.81	7,050,000
		DIVERSIFIED SERVICES					
6	2.04	Macroasia Corp.	4.75	4.8	4.75	4.75	21,000
17.25	9.8	Pacific Online Systems Corp.	11.5	11.5	11.25	11.25	28,000
30	6.4	Paxys Inc.	7	7.7	7	7.1	1,091,000
472.5	390	eTelecare Global Solutions Inc.	430	472.5	430	472.5	3,980
		MINING					
0.017	0.0085	Abra Mining and Industrial Corp.	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	70,000,000
6.9	3.6	Apex Mining Company Inc. A	6.2	6.4	6.2	6.4	1,196,000
7	3.85	Apex Mining Company Inc. B	6.4	6.6	6.4	6.6	1,027,000
21.25	7.8	Atlas Cons. Mining and Dev't Corp.	13	13.25	13	13	2,338,700
14.25	8.9	Benguet Corp. A	12	12	11.75	11.75	5,000
12.75	1.98	Dizon Copper Silver Mines Inc.	9	9.8	9	9.7	1,058,000
3.1	0.6	GEOGRACE Resources Philippines Inc.	1.82	1.94	1.82	1.86	68,490,000
0.56	0.18	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. A	0.49	0.52	0.49	0.51	330,140,000
0.61	0.22	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. B	0.53	0.55	0.53	0.56	64,720,000
0.038	0.017	Manila Mining Corp. A	0.027	0.028	0.027	0.028	564,900,000
0.041	0.02	Manila Mining Corp. B	0.031	0.032	0.031	0.032	126,400,000
30	3.6	NIHAO Minerals Resources Int'l Inc.	19.25	20.5	19.25	20.25	2,226,400
0.021	0.0088	Omico Corp.	0.013	0.013	0.013	0.013	410,800,000
0.015	0.007	Omico Corp. - Warrants	0.009	0.009	0.009	0.009	57,000,000
11.25	3.5	Philex Mining Corp.	9.9	10	9.7	9.9	8,734,000
49	14.75	Semirara Mining Corp.	42	42.5	42	42.5	296,000
1.36	0.55	United Paragon Mining Corp.	0.73	0.75	0.69	0.69	2,320,000
1.8	0.85	Vulcan Industrial and Mining Corp.	1.14	1.14	1.14	1.14	349,000
		OIL					
0.58	0.25	Basic Energy Corp.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	730,000
0.029	0.01	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. A	0.024	0.024	0.023	0.023	69,100,000
0.03	0.01	Oriental Pet. and Minerals Corp. B	0.025	0.025	0.025	0.025	17,000,000
13.75	9	Petroenergy Resources Corp.	9.8	9.8	9.8	9.8	4,000
0.032	0.0095	The Philodrill Corp.	0.027	0.028	0.027	0.027	141,100,000

AVERAGES				VOLUME	VALUE
Financial	858.74	UP	11.46	14,887,250	411,643,630.00
Industrial	4,058.48	UP	49.27	98,598,400	1,100,667,445.00
Holding Firms	2,028.97	UP	48.57	388,949,930	497,245,155.00
Property	1,594.16	DOWN	0.86	131,764,300	682,860,560.00
Service	1,797.13	UP	14.01	112,727,010	495,758,855.00
Mining & Oil	8,387.36	UP	284.16	1,882,934,100	563,699,565.00
All Shares Index	2,156.85	UP	29.14		
PSEI	3,537.29	UP	42.85		
		GRAND TOTALS		2,629,860,990	3,751,875,210.00

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Asia shares rebound on US retail hopes; yen up

JAPANESE businessmen pass by a digital screen flashing Tokyo share prices. Japan's Nikkei 225 average rose 395.83 points, or 2.66 percent, to 15,284.60 points as traders took their cues from Wall St. AP

Positive mood on Wall St. spreads to key regional markets

SINGAPORE—ASIAN STOCKS SURGED 3 percent on Monday, rebounding from four straight weeks of losses on hopes for strong US retail sales, while a report China is looking to buy Tokyo stocks supported the Nikkei and the yen.

Crude oil rose to near a record high within striking distance of $100 a barrel, buoyed by a persistently weak dollar and forecasts of colder US weather, while strong equity markets weighed on safe-haven government bonds. Gold hit a two-week peak.

Hopes for a stronger start to the US holiday season boosted Wall Street on Friday, with the positive mood flowing to Asia.

Early yesterday afternoon, Tokyo's Nikkei average climbed 2.8 percent, while MSCI's measure of other Asia Pacific stocks put on 3.6 percent, recovering from last week's 4.7-percent drop—its fourth-straight weekly decline.

Last Friday, also known as Black Friday, marked the first official day of the shopping season in the United States, where more than 147 million shoppers flocked to stores over the Thanksgiving holiday.

Most, however, went to discount stores and spending was down, according to a survey.

"Higher sales on Black Friday confirmed US consumer spending is relatively resilient, helping South Korean shares, which fell more than other Asian markets, outperform," said Jason Hwang, a strategist at Woori Investment and Securities.

Black Friday once marked the day many retailers turned a profit, or went into the black, for the year.

South Korea's Kospi jumped 4.4 percent, while Hong Kong shares added 4 percent.

The MSCI index, while still up 32 percent this year, has fallen more than 10 percent from the Nov. 1 peak, on growing worries that a deep US housing slump and credit losses suffered by major US banks could hurt the region's top export destination.

Investors bought major exporters on hopes that US consumers will remain resilient, sending Canon Inc. up 3.5 percent and Sony Corp. 5 percent higher.

Major miners were on the rebound after the recent selloff, with BHP Billiton climbing 5.3 percent and takeover target Rio Tinto up 8.2 percent.

Both benefited from a report in a Chinese newspaper that China's sovereign wealth fund was considering bidding with the country's major steel producers to offer about $200 billion for Rio. The fund, China Investment Corp., denied the report.

A separate report in Japan's Nikkei newspaper said the $200-billion fund was expected to invest some of its assets in Japanese stocks, lending support to beaten down Tokyo stocks and lifting the yen more than one percent.

The yen erased earlier losses on the report, with the dollar sliding to 108.33 yen from near 108.70 yen. The dollar hit a two-and-a-half-year low of 107.55 yen on Friday.

The euro fell to 160.45 yen from a session peak of 161.45 yen.

The dollar remained under pressure but had clawed off its record low versus the euro.

Investors remain on edge about more fallout from the credit crunch as year-end approaches and potentially forces investors to dump assets or scramble for cash to get their books in order as banks and funds grapple with the market strains.

"There's definitely a lot of negative articles around about the subprime issue, so it's hard to say the dollar is out of the woods at this stage," said Rick Lloyd, head of G10 currency trading at ABN Amro in Singapore.

Firmer stocks weighed on government bonds, with US 10-year Treasury yields falling 10/32 in price to yield 4.046 percent.

Reuters

DA, FAO ink deal to help Bicol farmers

By Amy R. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE has inked an agreement with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization on a year-long project aimed at restoring the livelihood of some 6,000 typhoon-hit marginal farmers in Bicol.

Entitled "Restoring Food Security in Typhoon-Affected Areas in the Bicol Region through the Provision of Agricultural Inputs and Technical Assistance," the P15-million (250,000 euros) project will be funded by the Spanish International Cooperation Agency.

"This project intends to restore and strengthen the food security of these typhoon-affected farmers through the provision of agricultural inputs and technical assistance," said Agriculture Secretary Arthur C. Yap.

According to the DA, the project will prioritize the most affected coconut and abaca areas in the provinces of Albay, Camarines Sur, Catanduanes and Sorsogon.

Yap said the selection of the target sites for the project was based on the findings and recommendations of a joint DA-FAO mission, which assessed the agricultural damage wrought by the super typhoons that hit Bicol last year.

The mission reported that 216,935 hectares and 29,769 hectares of coconut and abaca plantations, respectively, in Bicol were heavily damaged last year.

He said the project would help restore the food security and livelihood of more than 6,000 farmers and their families by, among others, training them on improved crop production and crop diversification.

The project will also provide other capability-building activities to enhance farmers' coping mechanisms in dealing with calamities.

He said this new initiative complements an ongoing three-year, foreign-assisted project of the DA on strengthening the agro-industrial sector in Bicol and the Caraga region, which is also being funded by the Spanish government through a 6 million-euro grant.

DOF asks gov't to go easy on granting perks

By Michelle V. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE HAS again called on Congress to streamline fiscal incentives, saying that the government is losing billions of pesos a year due to the giving out of "redundant" perks.

"We underscore that it is also because of wasteful resources from redundant tax incentives that government has been financially ill-equipped to address poor infrastructure and a substandard educational system," the DOF said in a position paper submitted to Congress.

The DOF cited a study showing that the government lost P62.5 billion in potential revenues in 2004 alone due to the granting of "redundant" incentives.

According to DOF's definition, incentives become redundant when the recipient firm would have invested in the country anyway even without the tax and duty-free perks.

The study authored by UP economics professor Renato Reside said that 95 percent of the incentives granted by the Board of Investments, 10 percent of those given by the Philippine Economic Zone Authority, 17.5 percent of perks granted by Subic Bay Metropolitan authority and 36.3 percent of those granted by the Clark economic zone were "redundant."

The DOF also claimed that incentives were not a major factor behind investors' decision to place their money in the Philippines.

The study showed that access to customers, political stability, ease of doing business, reliable infrastructure, labor cost and skilled labor were some of the major factors affecting decisions to invest in a country, not fiscal perks.

The DOF thus proposed that laws granting perks be consolidated into one, and that incentives be granted only to priority exporters and businesses located in the poorest provinces.

Smart puts up more cell sites in time for holidays

By Riza T. Olchondra

ANTICIPATING HIGH NETWORK TRAFFIC during the Christmas season, leading wireless services provider Smart Communications Inc. is putting up 250 more cell sites nationwide by the end of the year.

Smart has so far put up 350 new cell sites this year.

When completed, the expansion project covering 250 cell sites will bring the total number of Smart's GSM cell sites and base stations to about 6,700, covering 99 percent of the country.

Aside from widening the network's coverage area, the additional cell sites will strengthen the mobile phone reception of the 28.6 million Smart subscribers.

Smart network services division head Rolando G. Peña said the expansion would benefit subscribers in the provinces down to fifth-class municipalities, congested and densely populated areas and economic growth areas.

The Smart network includes the Talk 'N Text brand of subsidiary Pilipino Telephone Corp. (Piltel), which uses Smart's GSM network.

The PLDT group has set aside P10 billion in capital expenditures for Smart.

That makes up 40 percent of the telecommunications giant's upgraded capital expenditure of P25 billion for the year.

"Our capex for the first half reached P10 billion. We expect it to rise to P25 billion for the whole year from our earlier estimate of P22 billion, mainly due to better-than-expected cellular and wireless broadband take-up," PLDT president Napoleon Nazareno had said.

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Small borrowers in limbo ...

From page B1

According to Sison, NHMFC made sure that only its "high delinquent" accounts were sold to BFS, precisely because it wanted to keep its money-making current loans for its own portfolio.

With Maravilla's contention that his loan payments were up to date—payments were made automatically through salary deductions—Sison suggested that the fault could lie with the employer, which might have failed to remit collections to the NHMFC.

Another Sunvar employee, however, denied this, saying the company faithfully remits its payments to all government agencies, often several days ahead of deadline.

"We have all the receipts from them to prove it," said Rally Carvajal, who shares Maravilla's situation, having received a demand letter from BFS after her up-to-date housing loan was sold by the government.

"What's surprising is that there are five of us in this company with current home loans, but only three were transferred to BFS," she said.

In an e-mailed reply to the INQUIRER, BFS conceded that the housing loans in question may have been erroneously transferred from the state agency.

"Considering that Mr. Maravilla's account is current, it is possible that it was inadvertently included by NHMFC in the sale to Balikatan," said company spokesperson Gerrard Paez.

At the same time, the company laid the blame for Maravilla's troubles squarely on the government housing finance agency.

"Suffice it to say that the increase in Mr. Maravilla's outstanding balance was due to interests accrued from the last time he paid," Paez said. "The apparent increase reflected in our records was due to the fact that NHMFC had not yet remitted to BFS Mr. Maravilla's earlier payment to them at the time Mr. Maravilla visited us. As of October, however, BFS has already received these payments."

Both Sison and BFS say that Maravilla and other borrowers in similar situations can avail of a "put back" option where erroneously transferred loans would be returned to their original status.

Maravilla and his co-workers, however, would hear none of it, adding that they had been given the runaround and eventually informed by their account officers that the "put back" window had already been closed.

Instead, they opted to take out another loan from their company's retirement fund just to pay off BFS, despite subsequent offers of better terms.

"We just want to get hold of the title to our house," Maravilla said. "We don't know what else could happen."

Q3 GDP growth seen at 6.1-7.1%

From page B1

maximum of 7.1 percent during the period.

On the other hand, Santos said, rising prices of oil in the world market could temper the economy's growth to a minimum of 6.1 percent.

The Neda official said the agriculture, forestry and fisheries sector likely grew to 5 to 5.8 percent; industry, 6.1 to 7.3 percent; and services, 6.5 to 7.3 percent.

Should the third-quarter forecast be correct, Santos said, then the economy was well on its way to hitting a full-year GDP growth of 7 percent. This is higher than the government's official economic growth target of between 6.1 and 6.7 percent for 2007.

"The fourth quarter is normally higher than the third quarter because of higher consumer spending," Santos said.

Beating most expectations, the economy grew 7.1 percent in the first quarter and 7.5 percent in the second quarter. The second quarter growth was the fastest in two decades.

Government economic managers credited the robust growth to the increase in foreign investments and dollar remittances, as well as higher government spending. *With a report from Doris C. Dumlao, Reuters*

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Feast on advertising world's latest offering

IT'S NOT A PLATE BUT IT HAS ALL the dishes. And undeniably you can't get enough of it. It's none other than adobo Magazine, the indispensable voice of the Philippine advertising and brand communications scene and acclaimed as the "best advertising magazine the country has ever produced", according to ad industry veteran and former chair of JWT Jayjay Calero.

For adobo's year-ender issue, none other than Emily Abrera, the grande dame of Philippine advertising and chair of McCann Erickson, graces the cover. Find out what makes her tick, what ticks her off, and the biggest development in her much-acclaimed career.

Also part of adobo's main course is the 2007 Creative Recap from respected Asia Pacific executive creative directors. The likes of Jureeporn Thaidumrong, Eugene Cheong, Prasoon Joshi, Tay Guan Hin, and our own David Guerrero, Dave Ferrer and Melvin Mangada who whip up food for thought as they share their views on what this year meant for them and the industry. Find out who were nominated to adworld's Person of The Year.

Inside, too, is adobo's exclusive coverage of the 1st Asian Outdoor Advertising Festival in Singapore, the big winners of the recent London International Advertising Festival, a profile on Lowe Philippines' dashing new ECD Steve Clay, a special creative showcase review by Ted Royer from Droga5, and a spotlight on the key people and happening agencies cooking up an advertising storm in Vietnam. The heat is certainly on in (the city formerly known as) Saigon!

And before you completely get your fill, check out the adobo magazine 2007-08 Photographers Showcase supplement featuring the professional lensmen behind some of the most unforgettable and marketable images in the ad business today. And there is much more on offer in the latest edition of the magazine.

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WINDOWS AND BRIDGES OF PEACE IN THAILAND, PHILIPPINES

"Bridges Dialogues Towa
A C re of Pea
Microsoft Philipp International P un
igning

Microsoft Philippines and the International Peace Foundation recently inked a partnership agreement to work together during this year's 'Bridges-Dialogues Towards a Culture of Peace' Summit. Bridges is an annual event series, which the International Peace Foundation hosts in partnership with various national and international organizations, institutions and enterprises. This year's Bridges will be held in Thailand and the Philippines from November 2007 to April 2008. During the six-month period, Nobel Laureates from various fields, which include Economics, Physics, Medicine, Chemistry and Peace, will visit the host countries to start the dialogue process towards a culture of peace that will open windows of opportunity and build bridges by a sharing of ideas and thoughts and the development of innovative forms of cooperation. In the Philippines, 10 Nobel Laureates will visit institutions all over the country as it spreads the vision of Bridges, which is to 'build a culture of peace and development in a globalized world.' Shown are HRH Prince Alfred of Liechtenstein (center), Chair of the International Advisory Board of the International Peace Foundation (IPF), flanked by Uwe Morawetz, chair of the Board of Directors, IPF, and Antonio Javier Jr, managing director, Microsoft Philippines, during the contract signing held recently at the Dusit Hotel Nikko in Makati City.

PLDT MYDSL BROADBAND QUIZ

Philippine Long Distance Telephone Company (PLDT) public affairs office head Ramon Isberto (2nd from left) and PLDT community relations division head Evelyn del Rosario (2nd from right), Netopia Internet Café marketing manager Archie Nicasio (left) and Asian College of Science and Technology (Acsat) project officer Yuri Estrella lead the launching of the 1st PLDT MyDSL Broadband Quiz held at the PLDT head office in Makati City. The PLDT MyDSL Broadband Quiz is the biggest online competition in the country featuring the best among the graduates of the PLDT Infoteach Outreach Program. Only 4 teams from NCR, Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao advanced to the grand finals besting hundreds of students from all across the country who put their computer skills to the test in a real-time online challenge. The prizes at stake include cash prizes plus a computer showcase with free DSL connection for their respective schools. The PLDT Infoteach Outreach Program is a flagship project of the PLDT community relations division in tripartite partnership with Netopia Internet Café and Acsat. It was conceptualized in 2003 aiming to alleviate the lack of basic computer and Internet skills among secondary students and teachers via 24-hour basic training courses, in order to equip them the ample knowledge power in the competitive world of cyber-technology. To date, the program has produced over 2,000 graduates since its inception, utilizing the current curriculum providing for the basic training of fundamental Microsoft Windows software such as Microsoft Word, Excel, Powerpoint, and the use of the Internet.

Security Bank now in Bel-Air Makati

RESIDENTS OF THE UPSCALE BEL-AIR community as well as business owners and professionals working in its commercial row now have the convenience of availing of Security Bank's full range of deposit, investment and loan products. Security Bank Bel-Air Branch provides easy accessibility and ample parking at the newly constructed FMCB Building at 68 Jupiter Street.

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Business manager Diana Libunao and branch service manager Ma. Christine Ejercito, seasoned banking professionals, are on hand to offer expert financial and investment advice and account servicing. The entire branch team of service specialists is committed to delivering Security Bank's high standards of professionalism and customer care.

Open an account now at Security Bank Bel-Air Branch and join in the ongoing "Coffee on the House plus Spa Treats" promo. Participating accounts get to win instant rewards plus a chance to win relaxing spa packages. Promo is good until Jan. 31 only.

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Tel No. (632) 898-3354 to 57
SILICON VALLEY computer centre
Tel No. (632) 371-6868
TCA
Tel No. (632) 914-1270 / 73
THINKING-TOOLS
Tel No. (032) 254-2227
vcs VillMan
Tel No. (632) 892-2222
xitrix
Tel No. (632) 926-8279
ZENSHIN Systems Corporation
Tel No. (632) 365-0536 loc 149

Asian Canadian lawyers form new coalition

THE FEDERATION OF ASIAN Canadian Lawyers (FACL) held its inaugural meeting and conference recently at the Faculty of Law of the University of Toronto, 78 Queen's Park Circle, Toronto.

FACL is a diverse coalition of Asian Canadian legal professions. Its mission is to promote equity, justice and opportunity for Asian Canadian legal professionals and the community through the fostering of advocacy, community involvement, legal scholarship, and professional development.

"To ensure that this will be a broad-based initiative, we encourage participation from representatives and members of the various Asian communities," said Madame Justice Maryka Omatsu of the Ontario Court of Justice.

"Given the growing population of people of Asian descent in Canada, Asian Canadian lawyers have an increasingly important role to play to ensure that our legal profession responds appropriately to the needs of our communities," said Avvy Go, clinic director, Metro Toronto Chinese & Southeast Asian Legal Clinic. "That's why it is so important to establish a group like FACL," added Go.

A distinguished panel of trailblazers chaired by Gary Yee spoke about their personal experiences as Asian-Canadian lawyers who faced and overcame racial barriers. Justice Maryka Omatsu of the Ontario Court of Justice spoke about her experiences from the movement for redress for the Internment of Japanese-Canadian. She is the first Asian woman judge in Canada. Professor Wei, Associate Dean of Osgoode Hall Law School, spoke about being a member of the legal academic community. Neena Gupta, a partner at Gowlings, described her experiences as a woman of color at a large Toronto law firm. Justice of the Peace Delano Europa, a member of the Filipino community, spoke about the underemployment of immigrants as he related his own experience of being a judge in the Philippines, a laborer in Toronto, and then returning to the adjudication of justice as a member of the court.

Getting your US visa application approved

US IMMIGRATION LAWYER Michael Templo Esq will conduct a year-end seminar on Nov. 28, from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m., at the Asian Institute of Management Conference Center, Metro Pacific Room located at 123 Paseo De Roxas, Makati City. The seminar shall be a comprehensive overview of US visas. Find out which type of visa applies to you based on your qualifications and goals. Some of the temporary visa categories to be discussed are tourist, business and working visas. Each visa category's key features, limitations, proper filing procedures and fees will be explained in detail. For permanent visas such as immigrant visas, its requirements, quotas, proper filing procedures, fees, and expediting strategies will also be discussed. Helpful tips on alternative visa options, change or adjustment of status, common mistakes that cause delays in processing, and the dos and don'ts during the visa interview will be explained and clarified at the seminar, and a Q & A session follows afterwards.

Templo specializes on immigration and litigation cases in New York. He received his Juris Doctor degree from Touro Law in New York. He is a member of the American Immigration Lawyers Association, New York State Bar Association, New York State Trial Lawyers Association, and New York Country Lawyers Association. For registration and other seminar schedules and details, log on to www.templolaw.com, or call 893-5964 or 759-2985.

BOHOL II ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

Main Office: Cantagay, Jagna, Bohol
Sub-Offices: Alicia & Talibon, Bohol
Tel. Nos. 531-0053; 531-0054; (038) 238-2215/238-2541
Fax#: (038) 531-0023

INVITATION FOR BIDS NO. 2007-03

Bohol II Electric Cooperative, Inc. (BOHECO II) with office address at Cantagay, Jagna, Bohol is inviting eligible bidders for the supply and delivery of various Line Hardwares, Conductor Bare Wires and Distribution Transformers through subsidy fund and reinvestment fund.

Sealed bid proposals shall be received not later than 1:00 pm of December 07, 2007 at BOHECO II Main Office, Cantagay, Jagna, Bohol.

Interested bidders may obtain information, secure list of bidding documents from Boheco II Main Office, Cantagay, Jagna, Bohol.

Bid documents may be purchased upon payment of non-refundable fee amounting to Two Thousand Pesos (P2,000.00).

BOHECO II reserves the right to reject any or all bids with any defects therein and accept the offer most advantageous to the cooperative.

Bid Bond (Bid security in the amount of not less than five percent of the total bid price).

To all interested bidders please prepare the following documents for your accreditation.

a.) Company's Profile
b.) Mayors/Business Permit
c.) Audited Financial Statement
d.) DTI and SEC Registration

(Sgd.) Engr. Eugenio R. Tan, Sr.
Resident Manager

(PDI–Nov. 27, 2007)

ZAMBOANGA CITY ELECTRIC COOPERATIVE, INC.

(ZAMCELCO)
Zamboanga City

INVITATION TO BID

The Zamboanga City Electric Cooperative, Inc. (ZAMCELCO) at Putik, this city per requisite under Board Policies on Pre-Qualifications, and Bids and Awards, invites ALL interested Bidders/Suppliers to bid for the supply of the following electrical materials/equipment/items, to wit:

No.	Quantity	Unit	Item Description
1	7500	UNITS	ELECTRONIC METER, TYPE: HXE 12, CLASS 100, SINGLE PHASE WITH DOUBLE SEALING PROVISION, SOCKET BASE, SEALING RING AND WITH BATTERY, 240V, 60HZ AGENCY PRICE: P2,199.00 NOTE: ON CONSIGNMENT BASIS

You may secure the Pre-qualification Requirements from the office of the Finance Department, ZAMCELCO Complex in Putik, this city anytime during office hours and submit the same upon completion of all requirements thereof.

Submission of the Pre-qualification Requirements shall not be later than 5:00 p.m. of **December 4, 2007** and no documents appertaining thereto, shall be accepted thereafter.

All applicants will be duly notified as to the results of the pre-qualification eligibility process. Only those who are pre-qualified will be allowed to participate in the bidding. A post-qualification may be conducted accordingly hereafter.

Bidding will be conducted on **December 13, 2007**.

Sealed bid in duplicate copies should be submitted to the Committee on Bids and Awards at the Office of the Finance Department at the above-mentioned address on or before 2:00 p.m. of **December 13, 2007**. Five percent (5%) Bidder's Bond is required as a matter of policy.

The right to reject any or all bids; to waive any formality therein, or to accept such bid as may be considered advantageous to the coop is hereby reserved as an absolute prerogative of ZAMCELCO.

(Sgd.) **REINERIO R. RAMOS**
General Manager

(PDI - Nov. 27 & 28, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
Supreme Court
Manila

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Supreme Court through the Bids and Awards Committee for Goods and Services (BAC-GS) invites prospective bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for:

Name of Project	Approved Budget	Source of Funding
Three (3) units of Utility Vehicles Technical Specifications Direct injection Common Rail Diesel engine technology Direct injection Common Rail fuel system Double Overhead Camshaft (Turbo Charged) Engine displacement of not more than 2500 cc At least 10 persons seating capacity 5 speed manual transmission A/C AM/FM Stereo/CD Player At least 12 service centers within Metro Manila	P4,230,000.00	Judiciary Development Fund
Two (2) units of Utility Vehicles Technical Specifications Direct injection Common Rail Diesel engine technology Direct injection Common Rail fuel system Double Overhead Camshaft (Turbo Charged) Engine displacement of not more than 2500 cc At least 12 persons seating capacity 5 speed manual transmission A/C AM/FM Stereo/CD Player At least 12 service centers within Metro Manila	P2,290,000.00	Judiciary Development Fund

PERIOD OF DELIVERY:

Thirty (30) calendar days from receipt of Purchase Order (P.O.)

SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES:

1. PRE-BID CONFERENCE

The pre-bid conference will be held on:

Date : **December 4, 2007, Tuesday**
Venue : **Session Hall, 3rd Floor, Old Building, Supreme Court, Taft Ave. cor. Padre Faura St., Ermita, Manila**
Time : **10:00 a.m.**

2. SUBMISSION OF ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS AND OPENING OF BIDS

The eligibility requirements of prospective bidders must be personally submitted by the duly authorized representative, and the bids will be opened, thereafter, in the presence of the bidders or their authorized representatives, to be held on:

Date : **December 11, 2007, Tuesday**
Venue : **OCA Conference Room 2, 3rd Floor, Old Building, Supreme Court, Taft Ave. cor. Padre Faura St., Ermita, Manila**
Time : **10:00 a.m.**

Deadline for submission of eligibility requirements with the Technical and Financial Proposal Envelope shall be at 9:30 a.m. and the opening of bids shall immediately follow.

Prospective bidders must not be related to the head of the procuring entity or any member of the BAC-GS or its Secretariat either by consanguinity or affinity up to the third civil degree.

Interested bidders may secure eligibility requirements and bid documents which will be available starting **November 27, 2007 up to December 3, 2007 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. only from the Secretariat, BAC-GS, Office of Assistant Court Administrator Nimfa C. Vilches, Ground Floor, Old Building, Supreme Court, Taft Avenue, cor. Padre Faura St., Ermita, Manila**, after payment of a non-refundable fee of **One Thousand Pesos (P1,000.00)**, prior to the conduct of pre-bid conference. For additional information, the bidders may contact the Secretariat, **c/o Ms. Evangeline D. Reyes at tel. no. 523-13-01.**

The BAC-GS reserves the right to: 1) reject any or all bids, 2) waive any defects or informalities therein, 3) or accept any bid/s or offer/s which it may consider to be most advantageous and beneficial to the government.

November 21, 2007.

(Sgd.) **NIMFA C. VILCHES**
Assistant Court Administrator and
Chairperson, BAC-GS

(PDI–Nov. 27, 2007)

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
National Capital Region
DY Int'l Bldg., 1650 San Marcelino
cor. General Malvar St., Malate, Manila

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION/S FOR ALIEN EMPLOYMENT PERMIT/S (AEP/S)

Notice is hereby given that the following companies/employers have filed with this Regional Office application/s for Alien Employment Permit/s:

Name and address of Company/Employer	Name of Foreign National/Citizenship	Position
YOGAWORKS INC. 1503 88 Corporate Center, 141 Valero St., Salcedo Village, Makati City	Ryan Paul Chester British	Consultant
OCTAGON CHEM OIL CORPORATION Jipang Bldg., Perla St., (near Roxas Blvd.) Pasay City	Shuhei Ogawa Japanese	Vice President for Operations
DONG HAN PHILS., INC. U-102 Commerce Ave., Central Business Park, 146 A. Rodriguez Ave. Manggahan, Pasig City	Eun Jeong Choi Korean	Assistant Sales Manager
FUJITSU TEN SOLUTIONS PHILIPPINES, INC. 8/F East Tower PSE Bldg., Ortigas Center, Pasig City	Masatsugu Kamimura Japanese	Deputy Manager
CLC LUCKY INT'L., INC. U314 3/F Gateway Center, Paseo de Magallanes Comm. Ctr., Makati City	Zhiming Qiu Chinese	Purchasing Manager I
LINK2SUPPORT INC. 5/F Technoplaza I Bldg., Orchard Rd., Eastwood City Cyberpark, Libis, Quezon City	Robert Tak Huang Jr. American	Operations Audit Manager
SOGY NAWANSHAR TRADING CORP. 1503 Galvani St., Makati City	Parmjit Kaur Indian	Marketing Manager
SOGY NAWANSHAR TRADING CORP. 1503 Galvani St., Makati City	Aman Goyal Indian	Supervisor
SOGY NAWANSHAR TRADING CORP. 1503 Galvani St., Makati City	Jaswinder Kaur Indian	Supervisor

If you have any information/objection to the above mentioned application/s please communicate with the Regional Director.

RAYMUNDO G. AGRAVANTE
OIC, Regional Director

(PDI–November 27, 2007)

Virra Mall Pawnshop formerly located at 63 Level B Shoppesville Arcade, Greenhills, San Juan will hold an Auction Sale of all unredeemed items on December 7, 2007 at 10:00 A.M. to be held at Marilou of Greenhills Jewellers at #63 Level B Shoppesville Arcade, Greenhills, San Juan Vicente Zamora, Jr. – Auctioneer
(PDI- Nov. 27, 2007)

MCO Jewelry Pawnshop at Stall #2 & 3 Services Lane, Unimart Greenhills will hold an Auction Sale of all expired items on December 7, 2007 at 10:00 A.M. Mr.Vicente Zamora, Jr. - Auctioneer
(PDI- Nov. 27, 2007)

Victory Pawnshop formerly located at #45 Bonifacio Market EDSA Caloocan City will hold an Auction Sale of all unredeemed items on Dec. 7, 2007 at 10:00 A.M. to be held at Marilou of Greenhills Jewellers at #63 Level B Shoppesville Arcade, Greenhills, San Juan. Vicente Zamora, Jr.- Auctioneer
(PDI- Nov. 27, 2007)

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JAC FILIPINAS PAWNSHOP, INC., G/F Ever Gotesco Grand Central, Caloocan City will sell all unredeemed pledges for the months of **MAY & JUNE 2007** on **DEC. 19, 2007 at 11:00 am.** J. Lanuza – Auctioneer
(PDI–Nov. 27, 2007)

Notice is hereby given that the estate of the late Adriano S. Adlawan was extrajudicially settled among heirs of personal property with waiver of shares as pers Doc. No. 175, Page No. 35, Book No. XXVII Series of 2007 under Notary Public Atty. Robert Michael A. Natividad of San Mateo Rizal.
(PDI NOV. 18, 24 & 27, 2007)

JOB Market
Read it every Sunday with the Philippine Daily Inquirer.

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO BID

The Puerto Princesa City Water District through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC), invites suppliers/manufacturers/distributors to apply for eligibility and to bid for the hereunder project:

Name of the Project : Supply, Delivery and Commissioning of Three (3) Brand New Generator Sets (LOT I); Supply and Delivery of Slightly-used Backhoe Excavator with Breaker
Location : Puerto Princesa City Water District Stockyard, Brgy. Sta. Monica, Puerto Princesa City

Description of the Project :

			COST
LOT I	–	ONE (1) UNIT 50 KVA BRAND NEW GENSET, ONE (1) UNIT 60 KVA BRAND NEW GENSET AND ONE (1) UNIT 220 KVA BRAND NEW GENSET	P 2,300,000
LOT II	–	ONE (1) UNIT SLIGHTLY-USED BACKHOE EXCAVATOR WITH BREAKER: WHEEL TYPE, 0.15-0.20m³ BUCKET	1,000,000
TOTAL			P 3,300,000

Approved Budget For the Contract : Three Million Three Hundred Thousand Pesos (PhP 3,300,000)
Delivery Period : Forty-five (45) Calendar Days from the receipt of the Notice to Proceed

Prospective bidders should have experience in undertaking a similar project within the last 2 years with an amount of at least fifty percent (50%) of the proposed project for bidding. The Eligibility Check/Screening as well as the Preliminary Examination of Bids shall use non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated bid shall be conducted.

All particulars relative to Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Pre-Bidding Conference(s), Evaluation of Bids, Post-Qualification and Award of Contract shall be governed by pertinent provisions of R.A. 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulation (IRR).

Activities	Schedule
1. Issuance of Bid Documents	November 27, 2007 – December 10, 2007
2. Pre-Bid Conference	December 5, 1:30 P.M. PPCWD GM's Office
3. Deadline for Submission of Bids	December 13, 2007, 1:30 P.M.
4. Opening of Bids	December 13, 2007, 1:30 P.M., PPCWD GM's Office

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of non-refundable amount of P2,000.00 for Lot I, and P500.00 for Lot II to the Puerto Princesa City Water District Cashier.

The Puerto Princesa City Water District assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

Approved by:

(Sgd.) **ENGR. VICENTE D. ABREA**
PPCWD BAC Chairman

(PDI – November 27, 2007)

BANGKO SENTRAL NG PILIPINAS

Committee on Disposal of Real Properties

INVITATION TO BID

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas invites all interested parties to bid for the following real estate properties:

Location	TCT No.	Lot Area (sq.m.)	Description	Minimum Bid Price
Bulacan				
Gov. Halili Avenue,Turo, Bocaue	T-484556(M) *	3,552	Residential lot	12,593,000
Cavite				
Carissa Homes, Tanza				
Phase 1A	57 lots	35 to 63 sq.m.	Residential w/ 21 sq.m. Imp	P3,150 to P3,650/sq.m.
Phase 1B	40 lots	35 to 56 sq.m.	Residential w/ 21 sq.m. Imp	P3,250 to P3,650/sq.m.
Phase 2	31 lots	35 to 112 sq.m.	Residential w/ 21 sq.m. Imp	P2,850 to P3,650/sq.m.
Phase 3	40 lots	35 to 95 sq.m.	Residential w/ 21 sq.m. Imp	P2,950 to P3,650/sq.m.
Phase 3A	12 lots	35 to 56 sq.m.	Residential w/ 21 sq.m. Imp	P2,950 to P3,650/sq.m.
Phase 3B	86 lots	35 to 106 sq.m.	Residential w/ 21 sq.m. Imp	P2,900 to P3,650/sq.m.
Phase 4	63 lots	35 to 94 sq.m.	Residential w/ 21 sq.m. Imp	P2,900 to P3,650/sq.m.
Phase 5	26 lots	35 to 73 sq.m.	Residential w/ 21 sq.m. Imp	P3,100 to P3,650/sq.m.
Phase 7	116 lots	33 to 80 sq.m.	Residential w/ 18 sq.m. Imp	P3,000 to P3,850/sq.m.
Laguna				
Barreto Subdivision, Pansol				
Lot 3 Block 1	T-533497	300	Residential lot	600,000
Lot 4 Block 3	T-533504	300	Residential lot	450,000
Lot 22 Block 3	T-533518	300	Residential lot	300,000
Lot 23 Block 3	T-533519	300	Residential lot	300,000
Lot 24 Block 3	T-533520	300	Residential lot	300,000
Lot 25 Block 3	T-533521	301	Residential lot	301,000
Lot 26 Block 3	T-533522-A	623	Residential lot	498,400
Lot 1 Block 4	T-533523	300	Residential lot	600,000
Lot 5 Block 4	T-533527-A	300	Residential lot	600,000
Lot 6 Block 4	T-533528-A	300	Residential lot	600,000
Lot 7 Block 4	T-533529	300	Residential lot	600,000
Lot 1 Block 5	T-533535	300	Residential lot	600,000
Lot 2 Block 5	T-533536	344	Residential lot	516,000
Lot 8 Block 5	T-533542	337	Residential lot	505,500
Lot 13 Block 5	T-533531-A	328	Residential lot	656,000
Lot 14 Block 5	T-533530-A	329	Residential lot	493,500
Lot 16 Block 5	T-533528	326	Residential lot	489,000
Lot 17 Block 5	T-533527	323	Residential lot	646,000
Lot 24 Block 5	T-533533-A	316	Residential lot	474,000
Lot 1 Block 6	T-533532-A	300	Residential lot	450,000
La Union				
Catbangen, San Fernando	316121 to 22 *	1099	Residential w/ 221 sq.m. Imp	7,735,000

* with pending case

Deadline for submission of duly accomplished bid forms enclosed in sealed envelopes shall be on 12 December 2007, 10:00 A.M., at Rm. 313, Five-Storey Bldg, BSP Complex, A.Mabini St., Malate, Manila. All bids will be opened immediately after the deadline for submission of bids at 5th Flr, Executive Business Center, Five-Storey Bldg, BSP Complex.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. The Buyer is deemed to have inspected the property, determined its condition and verified the title thereof.
2. The sale of the properties shall be "As-is, Where-is" and the winning bidder shall undertake the responsibility to acquire and maintain peaceful possession and enjoyment of the property without seeking the assistance of the BSP.
3. The BSP reserves the right to withdraw any or all of the properties offered for sale at any time and to reject any or all bids or to waive any infirmity found therein, or to accept such offers as will be considered advantageous to the BSP.
4. Prices are subject to change without prior notice.
5. The Committee will immediately start accepting offers for negotiation, in the event of a failed bidding, and will continue to accept offers through the Asset Management Department. However, the Committee may at its discretion, elect to conclude the negotiation immediately after failure of bidding whenever there is a highest complying offeror ascertained.
6. Offerors at the Public Bidding must tender a BID BOND equivalent to 10% of the offered price and offerors under the negotiated sale basis must submit an EARNEST MONEY equivalent to 10% of the negotiated price either in CASH or CASHIER's/MANAGER's CHECK payable to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas which shall form part of the consideration once the offer is approved.
7. The sale shall be subject to other terms and conditions under existing guidelines.

Complete description of the properties, rules and regulations on the bidding procedures and the prescribed bid forms are available for a minimal fee of P50.00 at the Asset Management Department, Rm. 313, Five-Storey Bldg. through the following:

	Direct Line	Trunk Line: 524-70-11
Geraldine K. Tariengco/Juliet S. Villanueva	523-34-86	loc. 2857
Naida Santos/ Maricris Gutierrez/ Elvira Bermas	524-34-20	2381

(Sgd.) **MELPIN A. GONZAGA**
Committee Chairman

(PDI - Nov. 27, 2007)

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OBITUARIES

In Loving Memory
of the
20th Death Anniversary
of our
Beloved Momsie

ROSARIO CRISTOBAL MIRANDA

Who joined our Lord on November 27, 1987.

Holy Sacrifice of the Mass will be offered on Tuesday, November 27, 2007 at 7:30 a.m. at Family Mausoleum, Bacoor Memorial Garden, Bacoor, Cavite.

We request your prayers for the eternal repose of her soul.

Rosette, Veng, Grace and Teng

OBITUARIES

"...absent from the body to be present with the Lord." 2 Corinthians 5:8

MARIA LOURDES ECALNIR VARGAS

peacefully joined our Lord and her husband Alfredo Sr. on November 23, 2007 at the age of 75.

Her children **Monica** and **Alfredo III**, grandchildren, brothers and sisters-in-law, request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at the Loyola Memorial Park Chapel 2, Marikina City.

Interment will be on Saturday, December 1, 2007 after the 9:00 a.m. Mass.

RAYMUNDO "Mon" B. CACAO

Retiree of Manufacturing, United Laboratories, Inc.

Peacefully joined his Creator
on November 24, 2007
at the age of 62.

His body lies in state
at his residence at 3518 Vigan St.,
Sampaloc, Manila. Interment
to be announced later.

"Be at rest once more, O my soul,
for the Lord has been good to me."
(Psalm 116:7)

Death Notices

FRANCISCO LAVERNIE GATDULA

died on October 17, 2007 in Sweden.

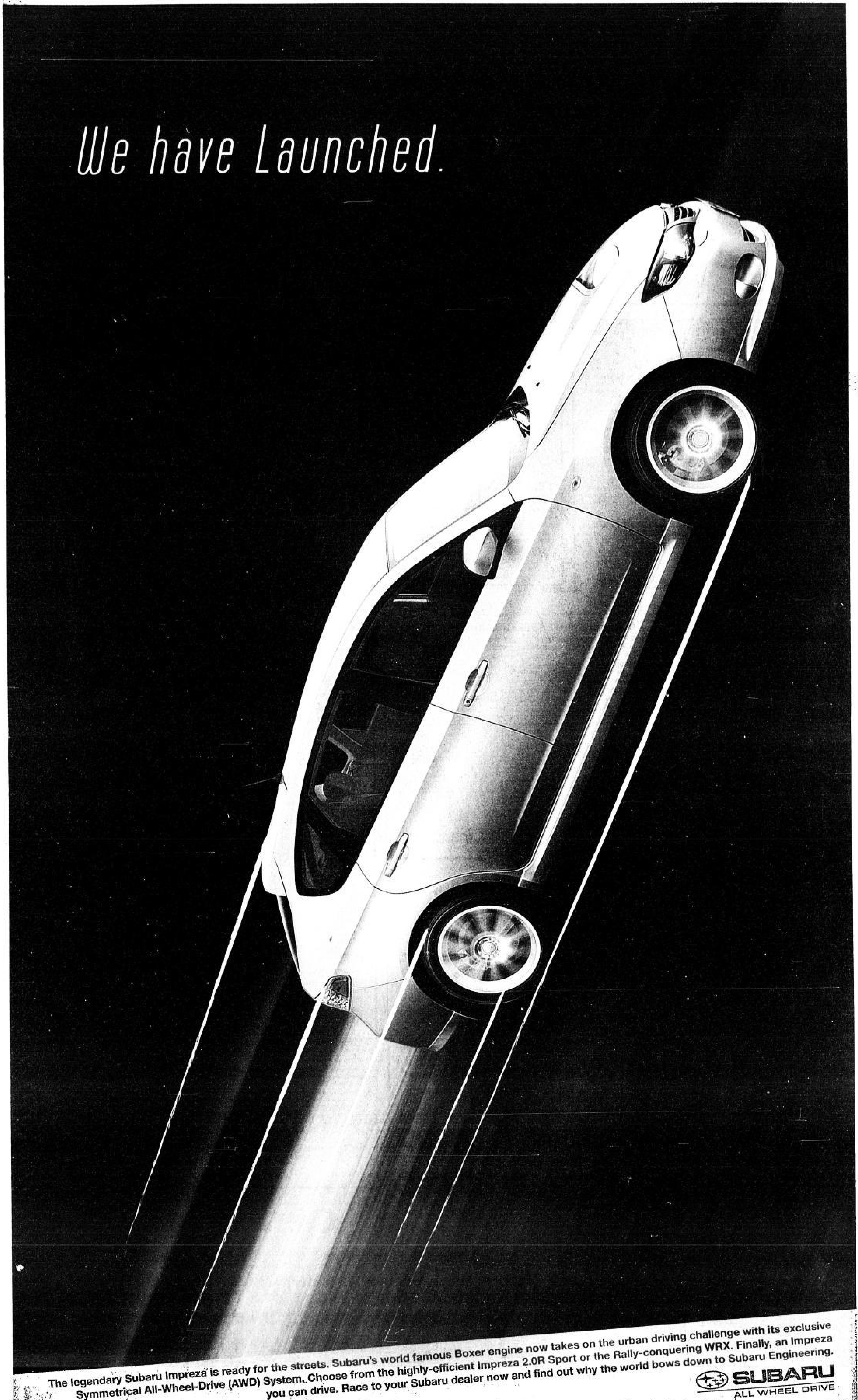
His body lies in state at Sto. Rosario Chapel (near Malolos Elem. School), Malolos, Bulacan.

Interment will be on Wednesday, Nov. 28, 2007 at St. Vincent Cemetery, Malolos, Bulacan.

DR. MANOLITO SYJUECO GOZON

September 18, 1936 – November 16, 2007

His remains lie in state at the Gozon Ancestral Home, 726 Rizal Avenue, Tañong, Malabon City. Interment will be on Wednesday, November 28, 2007 at Tugatog Cemetery, Malabon City after the 1:00 pm Funeral Mass concelebrated by Bishops, Diocesan and Religious Clergy at the San Bartolome Parish.



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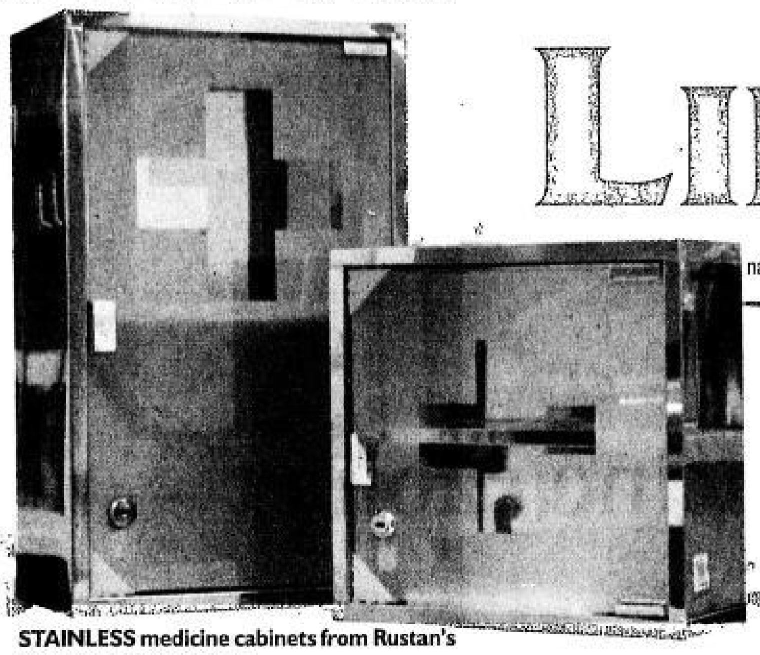
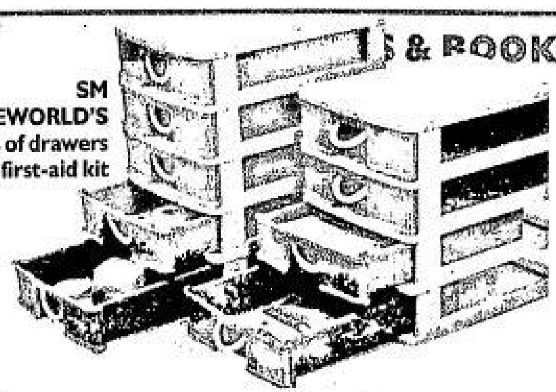
Website: www.inquirer.net/lifestyle
Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso
name/age/city/message to 2207 (Globe) and 386 (Smart) or email us at lifestyle@inquirer.com.ph

S & BOOKS ○ TUESDAY FITNESS ○ WEDNESDAY



STAINLESS medicine cabinets from Rustan's kitchen and bath section



SM HOMEWORLD'S sets of drawers for first-aid kit

Mind your medicine cabinet

A cool, dark and dry place, preferably out of a child's reach, is best for storing first-aid supplies

Text by Rowena C. Burgos
Photos by Jim Guiao Punzalan

CONTRARY TO TRADITION, A bathroom cabinet is not good for keeping over-the-counter or nonprescription or prescription medications. Health experts say that heat and humidity from showers and baths can cause both prescription and over-the-counter drugs to break down quickly and lose their potency.

A cool, dark and dry place, preferably out of a child's reach, is best for storing medicines, says Dr. Alissa Natividad, a company doctor.

"Ideally, medicine cabinets should be placed in the bedroom. Avoid direct sunlight for this will affect the medicine's potency," adds Peter Paul Lozano, a company nurse.

Professional organizer Kathleen Ong agrees with Natividad and Lozano.

"Consider room temperature. You don't want to put a medicine cabinet near a stove as the heat can affect medicines," she says. "If one's house is too big, put two medicine cabinets in accessible locations. Don't place them where you need to go through boxes."

Ong also suggests to regularly clean out your medicine cabinet and the area where you store medicines. Discard outdated products, damaged containers or anything leaking. Restock supplies that are low or missing. Keep all items in their original containers so that no one takes the wrong one.

"Taking these measures can help you treat minor emergencies promptly and effectively," Ong says.

First-aid kit

When it comes to your health and the health of your family, it is vital always to be prepared for the unexpected. Quick responses to medical emergencies can save lives. A well-stocked medicine cabinet should contain items that can help you get on the road to recovery, Lozano says.

For the first-aid kit, Lozano recommends the following: alcohol for cleaning wounds; an antiseptic like Betadine; rectangular bandages (or Band-Aids) for simple cuts or abrasions; butterfly bandages and narrow adhesive strips to hold the edges of a cut together and allow it to heal; individually wrapped, sterile gauze pads to control bleeding or secretions and prevent contamination; a roll of absorbent cotton as padding for a splint; elastic bandage to help decrease bleeding or swelling, or lend support to joints or sprained muscles; scissors and tweezers for cutting bandages and removing splinters; cotton-tipped swabs; thermometer (oral, rectal or for the ear); petroleum jelly to use with a rectal thermometer; antiseptic ointment, spray or

MIND/ C2

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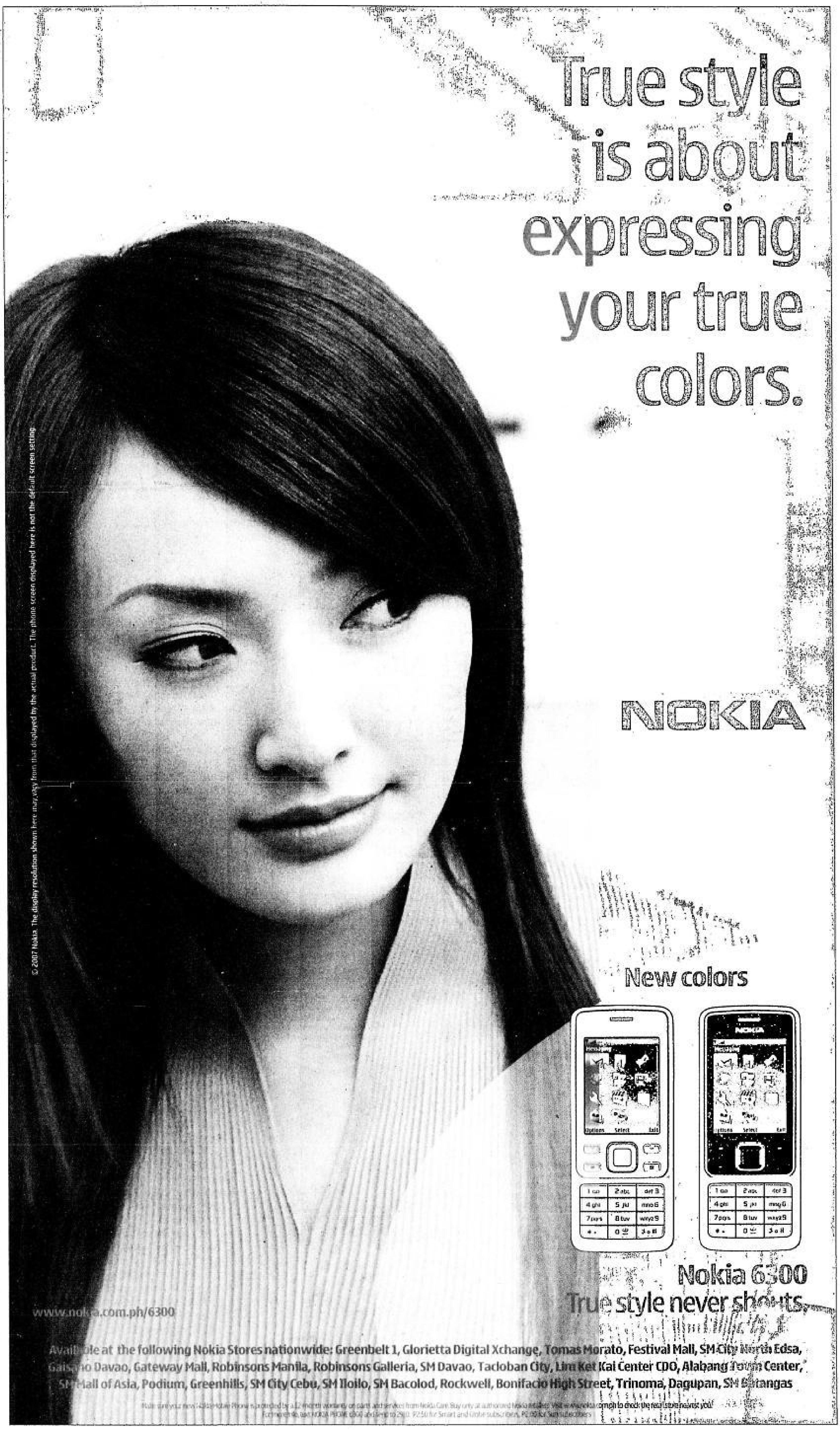

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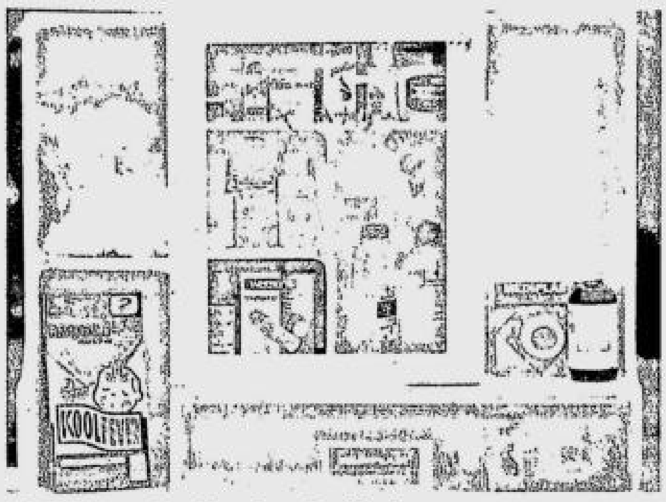
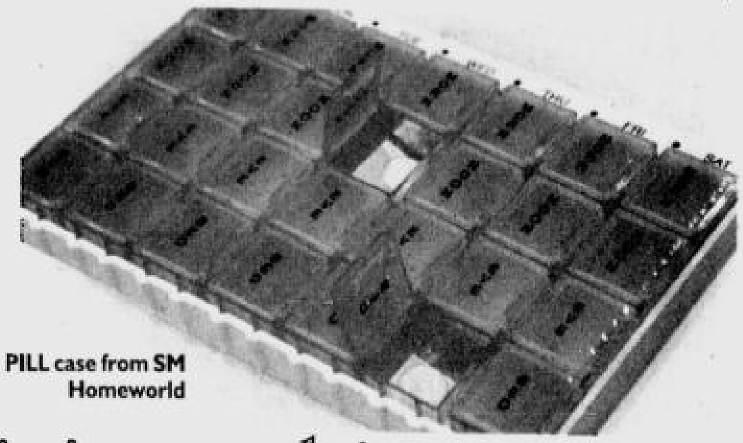


ROOMY first-aid cabinet from Ace Hardware

CABINET from Ace Hardware for first-aid essentials



PILL case from SM Homeworld

Mind your medicine cabinet

From page C1

towelettes for cleansing wounds; antibiotic ointment to prevent infection in minor wounds; anti-itch lotion or cream for relief of insect bites, itching and minor skin irritations.

Lozano also recommends having an ice bag for bruises and hot-water bag for those who opt to treat their migraine or dysmenorrhea with this rather than pop pills.

"It's more practical to keep these first-aid items in a bag. When a person accidentally wounds himself, for instance, you can easily bring the first-aid kit to that person wherever he is," Lozano says.

He also says to keep on hand a bottle of syrup of ipecac to induce vomiting if certain poisons are swallowed.

"But do not give this without directions from a doctor. In some cases, vomiting may be harmful," Lozano says.

CABINET for home medicines from Ace Hardware

Multipurpose essentials

Instead of trying to organize a cabinet packed with bottles and tubes, just start over. First, grab a trash can and throw away expired items. Then head to the pharmacy and buy these must-haves that cover virtually all your home-medicine needs.

If you're in pain, you can't go wrong with the old favorites: acetaminophen and ibuprofen.

"Follow all package instructions; if the pain persists, see a doctor," Natividad says. "Because of its anti-inflammatory action, ibuprofen is perfect for overworked muscles, joints and tendons. Always take it on a full stomach to ward off irritation and internal bleeding."

A good night's sleep can work wonders when you have a cold, so keep a product that combines a sedating decongestant with acetaminophen (which can also help lower a fever).

"Products affect people differently; try to find one that makes you feel sleepy but not jittery," Natividad says.

She adds that many people get by fine with a daytime "nondrowsy" cold formula, which may not dry up your runny nose as well but will keep you from working or driving under the influence.

In treating coughs, buy the DM formula, which packs the dynamic duo of sore-throat drugs: guaifenesin to loosen phlegm and dextromethorphan to suppress coughs. Most other medicines contain only one or the other, Natividad says.

Natividad also suggests antihistamine for allergic skin reactions and itching; stomach remedies to prevent or treat indigestion, heartburn or upset stomach; and anti-diarrheal products.

"Medications for kids and adults should be placed in separate containers because some pills for headache have the same packaging or shape and color as children's vitamins," Lozano adds.

When selecting over-the-counter medicines, Lozano says to make sure all tamper-resistant features are intact.

"When taking medicine, always remember to check the proper dosage, especially for children. Read the label every time. Pay special attention to directions and warnings. If you have questions about your medicine, talk to your doctor, pharmacist, or other health-care professional."

MEDICard, The Healthcare I Deserve!

Take Charge Doc!

What are the common skin diseases in the Philippines?

There are a lot of common skin diseases in the Philippines ranging from allergies, infections (fungal, viral, and bacterial) to autoimmune. Here are the five most common diseases based on my practice at The Medical City: 1. Atopic Dermatitis (asthma of the skin), It is the eczema known to itch first before it rashes, usually have a long playing on and off attacks of very itchy, red, dry rashes commonly over flexural areas. It may first be seen at any range, sometimes aggravated by stress, temperature change and excessive dryness of the skin. It is commonly found in patients with family history of Asthma. 2. Contact dermatitis, it is a generic term applied to acute or chronic inflammatory reactions to substance that come in contact with the skin. 3. Seborrheic Dermatitis, It is a very common chronic dermatosis characterized by redness and scaling occurring in regions where the oil glands are most active, such as the face & scalp and the body folds. Mild seborrheic dermatitis causes flaking (dandruff). 4. Acne Vulgaris (pimples), it is an inflammation of the pilosebeccous units of certain body areas that occurs most frequently in adolescence and manifest itself as comedones (black & white heads) or cystic. 5. Verruca Plana (flat warts) is cause by a virus called HPV, It commonly presents as small, sharply, pin point in size, sharply marginated, rough surfaced, brownish-gray lesions that can occur almost anywhere in the body. This is commonly treated by electrocauterization, freezing or by laser treatment. There are still a lot of common diseases not mentioned, if you noticed any abnormality in your skin it is best to consult a board certified dermatologist in order for you to be treated well and be given the proper medications needed.

This week's answer to our feature question was provided by our accredited dermatologist, Dr. Irma Tan-Nuñez. Dr. Nuñez, a medicine graduate of the University of Sto. Tomas, has been been in practice for 5 years now and is a member of the Philippine Dermatological Society. Dra. Numez is married to Dr. Anthony Nuñez, an ophthalmologist and is blessed with two children. Dra. Nuñez loves to travel although she spends all of her free time with her kids. MEDICARD members may avail of her consultation services at The Medical City from Monday to Saturday 9am to 12noon and 3-6 in the afternoon.

Nicky

MEDICard's Medical Director, Dr. Nicky Montoya answers questions on health through the assistance and expertise of MEDICard's network of accredited specialists. Write to Dr. Nicky or E-mail him at inquiry@medicardphils.com for your inquiries on health matters.

Eat healthy this season

THE SPECIAL HOLIDAY ISSUE OF healthy Options Lifestyle News Digest dwells on a favorite topic of Filipinos—food.

It also carries a reminder for the merry-making public to avoid things that will be bad for their health, like drinking and driving.

In other stories, Healthy Options News Digest reports that the rules of healthy eating have changed.

Guided by scientific findings, are stocking up their pantry with foods, like fresh fruits, that can help prevent diseases, and avoiding those identified as potentiallyhazardous to their health.

The magazine offers a comprehensive guide to the nutrition-conscious and allergy-prone. Studies on specific disorders, what allergy triggers to avoid are also discussed, among others.

The news digest tries to give readers a better understanding of the components of food and how they influence health and disease.

The articles include "Allergies and Sensitivities," "Feingold Diet," "Gluten-Free Diet," "Peanut Allergy: The Shocking Facts" and "Milk Allergy Diet."

"The Health Benefits of Juicing" explains why drinking fresh fruit or vegetable juices is good.

In "Dietary Approaches to Treating Autism," claims about how vitamin and mineral supplements may improve the condition is discussed.

Also contained in the Healthy Options Lifestyle News Digest Nov/Dec2007 issue is a photo spread.

The Healthy Options Lifestyle News Digest is available free to customers. Visit www.healthyoptions.com.ph.

New slimming drink

HYDROTRIM, AN orange-flavored slimming drink, boosts the body's metabolism through its Supercitrimax formulation.

It contains hydrocitric acid (HCA), a natural extract of Garcinia Cambogia that had long been used in the East as a food supplement.

It has been found to help control obesity and get rid of unwanted pounds by increasing the body's fat-burning ability.

The all-natural, caffeine-free, non-laxative HCA suppresses the appetite by making the brain think that the body is full.

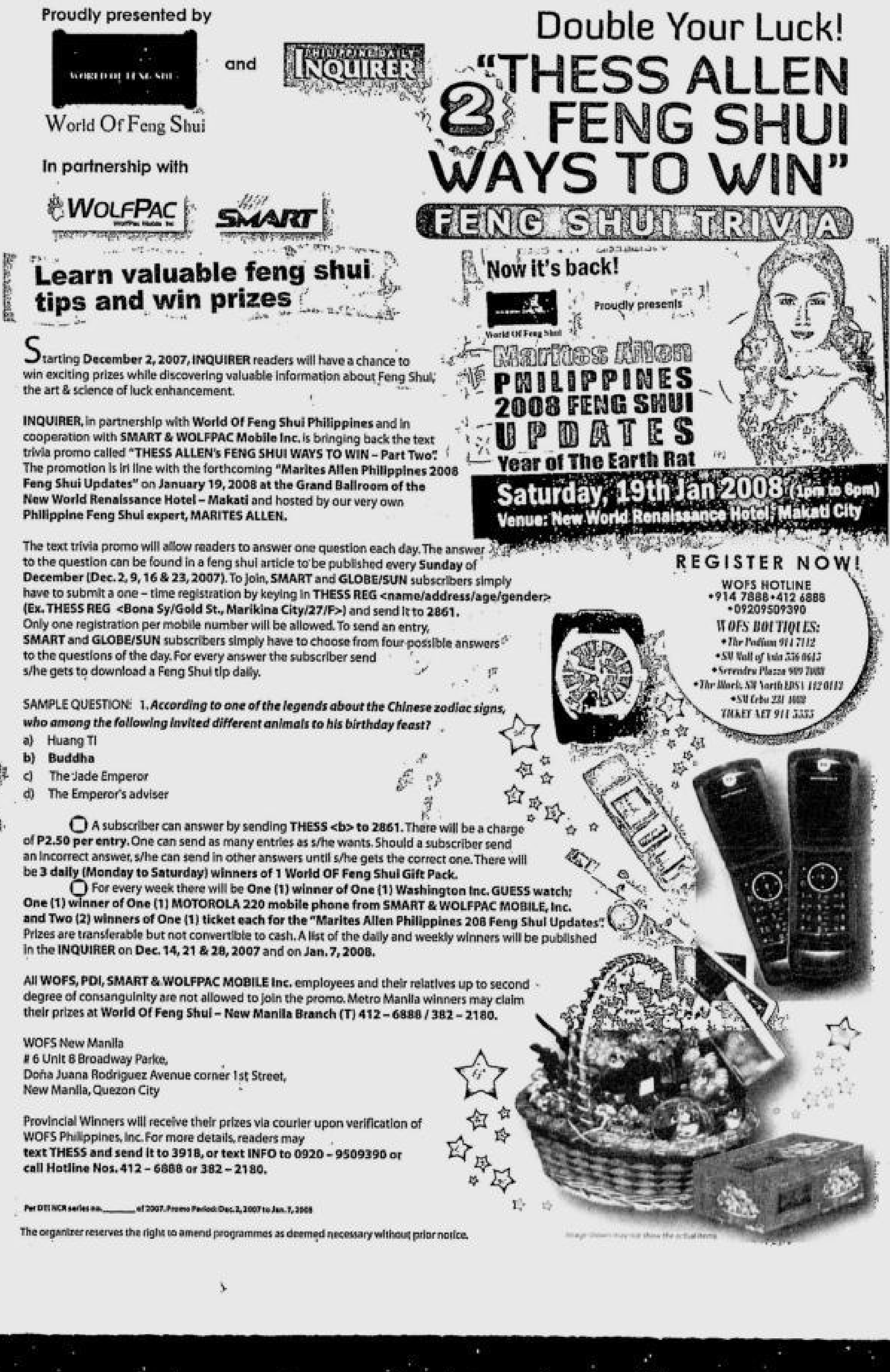
As a result, a person reduces his/her craving for fatty, carbohydrate-rich or sugary food—main contributors to weight gain.

Besides being a natural antioxidant (a substance that combats disease-causing free radicals), Hydrotrim, a fruity alternative to sugar-rich juices and carbonated soft drinks, also speeds up the body's metabolism, allowing it to reduce safely fatty deposits, especially in the so-called love handles, thighs and arms, and adipose tissue.

But first-time users should still watch what they eat and refrain from bingeing on sweets and fatty food, main sources of excess fat in the body.

With moderate exercise regimen and Hydrotrim, a trim, slim and sexy figure can be achieved within a few months.

Hydrotrim is available in Mercury Drug and other leading drugstores nationwide. Call 8941111 or e-mail hydrotrim.php@megawecare.com.



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Double Your Luck!
"THESS ALLEN 2 FENG SHUI WAYS TO WIN"
FENG SHUI TRIVIA

Learn valuable feng shui tips and win prizes

Starting **December 2, 2007, INQUIRER** readers will have a chance to win exciting prizes while discovering valuable information about Feng Shui, the art & science of luck enhancement.

INQUIRER, in partnership with **World Of Feng Shui Philippines** and in cooperation with **SMART & WOLFPAC Mobile Inc.** is bringing back the text trivia promo called **"THESS ALLEN's FENG SHUI WAYS TO WIN – Part Two".** The promotion is in line with the forthcoming **"Marites Allen Philippines 2008 Feng Shui Updates"** on **January 19, 2008 at the Grand Ballroom of the New World Renaissance Hotel – Makati** and hosted by our very own **Philippine Feng Shui expert, MARITES ALLEN.**

The text trivia promo will allow readers to answer one question each day. The answer to the question can be found in a feng shui article to be published every **Sunday** of **December (Dec. 2, 9, 16 & 23, 2007).** To join, **SMART** and **GLOBE/SUN** subscribers simply have to submit a one – time registration by keying in **THESS REG <name/address/age/gender> (Ex. THESS REG <Bona Sy/Gold St., Marikina City/27/F>)** and send it to **2861.** Only one registration per mobile number will be allowed. To send an entry, **SMART** and **GLOBE/SUN** subscribers simply have to choose from four possible answers to the questions of the day. For every answer the subscriber send s/he gets to download a Feng Shui tip daily.

SAMPLE QUESTION: 1. ***According to one of the legends about the Chinese zodiac signs, who among the following invited different animals to his birthday feast?***
a) Huang Ti
b) Buddha
c) The Jade Emperor
d) The Emperor's adviser

○ A subscriber can answer by sending **THESS <b> to 2861.** There will be a charge of **P2.50 per entry.** One can send as many entries as s/he wants. Should a subscriber send an incorrect answer, s/he can send in other answers until s/he gets the correct one. There will be **3 daily (Monday to Saturday) winners of 1 World OF Feng Shui Gift Pack.**

○ For every week there will be **One (1) winner of One (1) Washington Inc. GUESS watch; One (1) winner of One (1) MOTOROLA 220 mobile phone from SMART & WOLFPAC MOBILE, Inc. and Two (2) winners of One (1) ticket each for the "Marites Allen Philippines 208 Feng Shui Updates".** Prizes are transferable but not convertible to cash. A list of the daily and weekly winners will be published in the **INQUIRER** on **Dec. 14, 21 & 28, 2007** and on **Jan. 7, 2008.**

All WOFS, PDI, SMART & WOLFPAC MOBILE Inc. employees and their relatives up to second degree of consanguinity are not allowed to join the promo. Metro Manila winners may claim their prizes at **World Of Feng Shui – New Manila Branch (T) 412 – 6888 / 382 – 2180.**

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Provincial Winners will receive their prizes via courier upon verification of WOFS Philippines, Inc. For more details, readers may **text THESS and send it to 3918, or text INFO to 0920 – 9509390 or call Hotline Nos. 412 – 6888 or 382 – 2180.**

Per DTI NCR series no.______ of 2007. Promo Period: Dec. 2, 2007 to Jan. 7, 2008

The organizer reserves the right to amend programmes as deemed necessary without prior notice.

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INNER AWARENESS
Jaime Licauco

Is Mariang Makiling myth or fact?

ALFREDO SALCEDO JR., A young doctor from Iloilo City and a regular reader of this column, sent several questions that might be of interest to other readers as well.

He said, since childhood, he had been interested in paranormal phenomena and even tried to discover them on his own.

Here are Dr. Salcedo's questions and my replies:

1. Is Mariang Makiling true? Have you ever encountered her? What is her nature?

According to Philippine folk beliefs, there are three *diwata* or enchanted beings, all named Maria, living in sacred mountains. They are Mariang Makiling in Mt. Makiling, Mariang Sinukuan in Mt. Arayat and Mariang Banahaw in Mt. Banahaw.

They are considered mythical and legendary creatures that do not have real existence.

However, some mystics and mediums in Mt. Banahaw told me the three Marias were real and had appeared to those they wanted to see them.

I do not know personally if these three are true or not. But I do not doubt the existence of such enchanted beings as fairies or *diwata*. They are part of the elemental kingdom or nature spirits.

2. If the Mayan Calendar's prediction is true (that the present Earth cycle will end at midnight of Dec. 11, 2012), what can we do to prepare (religiously, morally or practically) for that event?

There is actually not much time for humankind to prepare, is there? That is only five short years from now. There is really nothing we can do about the changes that will occur.

But we can prepare ourselves by raising our consciousness or developing our sensitivity to psychic and spiritual forces. According to information from some benign entities, those who have raised their levels of awareness or clairvoyance will know what to do and where to go before the cycle ends, which is always preceded by natural calamities and disasters.

It is only very recently that more people on Earth are beginning to be aware of and doing something about the world's environmental and ecological problems. For so long, warning signs were ignored by almost all governments.

Each of us must do our part to help reduce the pollution we caused. We cannot rely on any outside agency to do this for us.

3. Have you heard about hemi-sync? Is that effective? In what way?

Yes, I have heard about it and I even have two tapes of hemi-sync. As far as I know, this was developed by the late American engineer Robert Monroe of the Monroe Institute.

Hemi-sync is short for hemispheric synchronization. It consists of scientifically made sounds aimed at synchronizing the brain waves of the left and right hemispheres of our neocortex to achieve quickly the alpha or theta state.

Its effectiveness depends on individual sensitivity and inclinations. For some it is effective. They reach the alpha state by listening to it using an earphone. Separate but synchronized sounds are heard in each ear as one listens.

However, one can also reach the alpha state easily even without such a device by simply practicing the meditative technique I teach in my courses.

4. During my internship, I wondered why I got gloomier (and sicker) when on duty at the pediatric ward than at the medical ward. Are there more negative energies at the pediatric ward?

Perhaps in the hospital where you did your internship, yes, but we cannot generalize. Some people are just sensitive to energies and others are not. We must look at the pediatric ward to tell what was causing your negative reaction.

In any big hospital, I read that there were rooms where more patients died than at other rooms or wards. Hospital administrations should be concerned if they notice such a pattern.

Note: For inquiries on Inner Mind Development, ESP and Intuition Development; and Soulmates; Karma and Reincarnation seminars by this writer, call 8107245 or 8926806, fax 8159890 or e-mail innerawareness_2005@yahoo.com.ph. Visit also our website www.jaimelicauco.com.

Your Doctor Knows Best
Nemencio A. Nicodemus Jr., MD, FPCP, DPSEM

Question:

I have been gaining weight ever since I reached age 40. I guess it's because I'm doing more computer work in the office with less exercise. Lately, I have been having nape pains and occasional chest pains. Is it possible that I am developing heart disease?

Doctor Says...

When someone gains fat and, consequently, gets heavier, it is not just the weight that is gained but more importantly, the increased risk of developing other unfavourable conditions. It was previously thought that being obese was just an aesthetic problem, which only causes undesirable external appearances. Now, more and more studies show that obesity occurs together with other diseases including elevated blood sugar, high blood pressure and abnormal cholesterol levels.

The clustering of these conditions within the same individual has been called by several names in the past, such as "Syndrome X", "Deadly Quartet" and "Insulin Resistance Syndrome". But the latest term that has been used to call this group of diseases is "Metabolic Syndrome". The word "syndrome" refers to a group of symptoms that collectively indicate or characterize a disease. In the case of metabolic syndrome, it refers to a group of disease conditions that increase the risk of developing diabetes and heart disease.

The main feature of metabolic syndrome that is a pre-requisite to make a diagnosis, according to the International Diabetes Federation, is excessive abdominal fatness also called central obesity. A person of South Asian descent is considered obese if the waist circumference exceeds 31.5 inches in women and 35 inches in men. Here, the waist is measured midway between the lowest ribs and the hips.

When these numbers are exceeded, one needs to possess any additional two of the following conditions to qualify as having metabolic syndrome: (1) elevated fasting blood sugar above 100 mg/dl or a diagnosis of diabetes, (2) elevated blood pressure above 130/85, (3) reduced levels of good cholesterol (HDL): less than 40 mg/dl in men and 50 mg/dl in women, (4) high levels of body fat or triglycerides above 150 mg/dl.

The best way to initially treat metabolic syndrome is via a structured program of lifestyle modification aimed at reducing weight by at least 5% within 6 months. This is achieved thru the incorporation of proper information, reduced caloric intake with a concomitant reduction in fat intake, and increased physical activity, with regular physician contact in one's routine.

Together with weight reduction, it is equally important to reduce blood sugar, lower the blood pressure and cholesterol levels in order to reduce one's chances of developing heart disease and diabetes. Needless to say, your doctor is in the best position to address your health related concerns.

Dr. Nicodemus is an Internist-Endocrinologist who is an Associate Professor at the University of the Philippines-College of Medicine. He is a consultant at the Philippine General Hospital and the training officer of the Department of Medicine of Manila Doctors Hospital.

This column is supported by AstraZeneca Philippines as part of its disease awareness campaign. This is not intended to replace the advice of a healthcare professional. Always consult your doctor.

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Brilliance

Top fitness trends for 2008

By Mitch Felipe
Contributor

EVERY YEAR, NEW PROGRAMS EMERGE as a response to growing needs of diverse populations and to attract more people to adopt a healthy lifestyle.

Over the years, fitness centers multiplied and personal training sessions were offered not just for body builders, but for the general population.

Programs for those with medical concerns like low back pain gained popularity since many physical therapists became fitness professionals. The trend convinced the public that personal trainers did not have to look like those in glossy fitness magazines.

From basic strength training, regimens moved to the use of resistance training machines like leg extension to compound body weight exercises like squats with upper body exercises.

The use of balls, bands and balance board were favored by trainers for a more sports-specific, functional and integrated workout session.

Pre-choreographed classes by Les Mills Body Training systems came to the Philippines in 2002. The six programs—Body Balance, Body Pump, Body Combat and Body Jam, RPM, Body Attack and Body Step—were guided by the latest trends in music and latest developments in exercise science.

Last year, Bikram Yoga, a 90-minute class practiced in a room heated to 105°F with 26 postures guided by an instructor became one of the hottest workouts.

Fitness survey results

Now the American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) has just released fitness predictions for 2008 based on its second annual fitness trend survey.

The top 10 fitness trends were ranked from highest to lowest based on opinions of health and fitness professionals worldwide:

1. Educated and experienced fitness professionals

The increasing involvement of educated and experienced fitness professionals tops the list mainly because the industry is giving much importance in offering large populations a wide variety of exercises that are safe and effective.

A certification from groups like the American Council on Exercise (ACE) requires individuals to remain updated on fitness trends and researches by earning continuing education credits through seminars and distance learning.

2. Programs to fight childhood obesity

The problem of obesity starts in childhood and can be attributed to family upbringing. Kids should be introduced to sports and parents should be role models for healthy eating and active lifestyle.

Sommerville school in Massachusetts operates cafeterias that offer fresh fruits, vegetables, healthy meals and baked snacks. Yoga and dance sessions became part of physical education classes.

> Educated and experienced professionals will be more involved in the fitness industry.

More than one million kids are now working out in clubs, according to a joint survey by International Health, Racquet & Sportsclub Association (IHRSA) and American Sports Data, Inc. Children account for 17 percent of all individuals purchasing training services.

3. Personal training

A one-on-one exercise session is recommended if you have special medical concerns, want to learn about fitness, or are having a hard time sticking to an exercise routine. Knowledge will save you time, money and effort.

4. Strength training

Incorporating strength training into a fitness routine will continue to be emphasized.

Eight to 10 strength training exercises should be done at least twice a week, according to the American Heart Association and ACSM's physical activity guidelines.

5. Core training

Core training strengthens muscles around the spine like the pelvis and abdominal muscles. Its popularity in fitness training is expected to continue with or without equipment.

6. Special fitness program for older adults

Special programs for older adults to improve strength and balance will be given more attention.

Les Mills' Body Vive, a low impact class integrating aerobic exercise, resistance training and stretching is especially suited to active adults in their 40s to 60s.

7. Pilates

A mind/body class that targets core muscles and improves overall strength and flexibility will continue to gain popularity.

8. Functional fitness

Functional training mimics movements involved in activities of daily living like climbing stairs or picking up things from the floor. It trains you to do an activity without getting injured. An exercise like step-ups while holding a medicine ball in front of you can train you to climb stairs while carrying books.

This type of training will help you exercise in less time to meet the demands of your busy schedule. Also, it is more practical and the benefits more evident since you can apply it to activities of daily living.

9. Swiss ball

The use of a rubber gym ball with variable diameter that allows for a wide range of activities to help improve core strength and balance will also become more popular.

10. Yoga

Various forms of yoga, like Power Yoga and Bikram Yoga, will continue to be explored as fitness activities.

Yoga trains you to be more aware of your body during movements by doing proper breathing and relaxation techniques.

Shirley Quejada, Fitness Network Philippines president, foresees the popularity of mind/body exercises like yoga in the Philippines due to the increasing stress levels of the adult population.

E-mail the author at mitchfelipe@gmail.com

Healthy digestion campaign goes nationwide

YAKULT BRINGS ITS "MABUBUTING Baktirya para sa Sigurado Ka Tiyan" Probiotics Comprehensive School Program (CSP) nationwide.

The program, undertaken in partnership with the Department of Education and Mary Lindbert International (MLB), is currently being implemented in public and private schools in the National Capital Region, Region III and Region IV-A.

It will soon include schools in the Visayas and Mindanao.

The program educates and creates awareness among grades one and two pupils of the importance of the new lifestyle science of probiotics to achieve a healthy digestive system for a healthy body.

Apart from providing learning aids, students are taken on interactive school tours and invited to participate in the annual hands-on Parol Making Contest, with the theme "Paskong Yakult, Paskong Pinoy."

Yakult Philippines Inc. director Michael Dy Sun Ong said the company had taken pride in producing some of the best recycled lanterns showcasing the ingenuity of children.

Contestants create Christmas symbols using empty Yakult bottles, in addition to other materials.

Winning lanterns are displayed at the Yakult University in Japan, Ong said.

He said the company was looking forward to the participation of students from Visayas and Mindanao this year.

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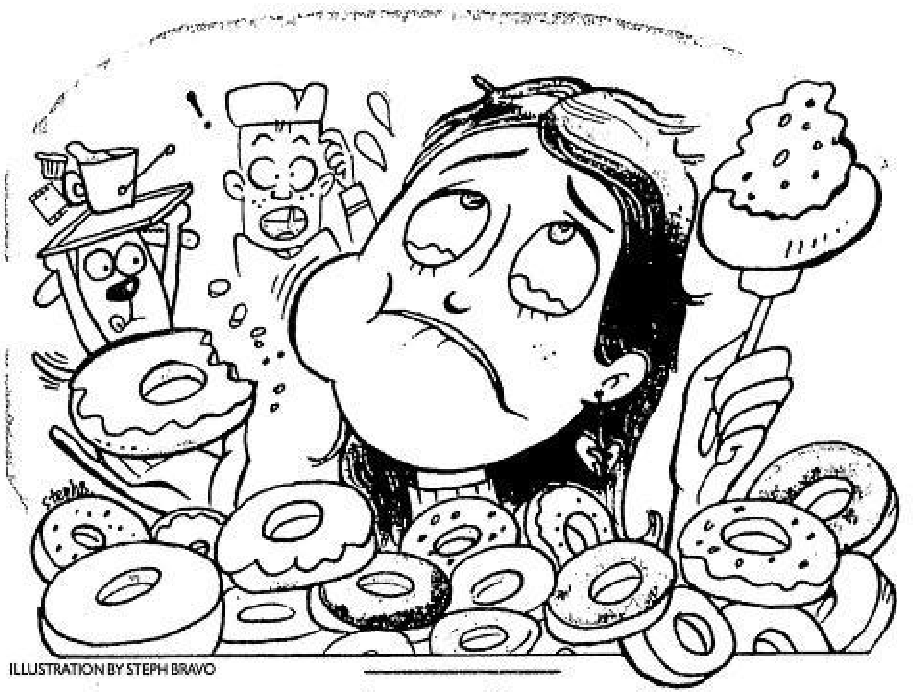


ILLUSTRATION BY STEPH BRAVO

INSIDE OUT
Cory Quirino

Junking the habit

STEPS TO CLEAR out and clean out promise only one gift—liberation. But to achieve this, you have to decide today to quit all habits that feed your dependency.

Addictions

It is true that people define their own way of living, their lifestyle revolving around their desires and dreams. Often, the stuff that makes life exciting can be addictive as reflected in the expression "if it isn't sinful then it's fattening."

Here is a random list of popular addictions:

Love

Whether you are in a loving relationship, a marriage, a divorce/separation, an argument or a breakup, it is best to stop in the middle of your tracks and say: "It is all about me and where I want to be."

In the need and search for love, there are certain tendencies—some aggressive, others self-destructive. At this point, it becomes a habit worth breaking.

If any situation/person is toxic to you, it is time to act. The question is how long do you intend to take your poison. Before making any move, try this exercise to know where your heart is.

Heart meditation

Sit quietly in the early morning. Close your eyes. Focus your breathing and attention to the middle of your chest. Find your spiritual heart directly behind your ribcage, in the center of your heart.

Do not listen to your heart beat, simply feel. Find that space where the heart is. Soon you will be aware of peace when you let your breath go into your heart center.

Now visualize soft pastel lights. If you sit and listen, your heart will release emotions you have long kept imprisoned—fears, wishes, feelings, memories.

It is okay if you fall asleep. Just go back to your meditation. Soon you will achieve purification. You have listened to your heart without judgment.

Sweets

A craving for sweets is not bad, but when you make it a daily habit to finish a whole box of chocolates or a plateful of pastries, then your craving has reached addictive levels.

Though you may not have diabetes yet, you probably are already a borderline diabetic.

Managing your sweet tooth is possible if, you can:

Substitute a fruit for candy bar, delay the sugar craving when it hits, snack on something healthy before going for the cream puff, eat sweets only during the day, eat in the company of friends and not alone.

Why? Studies show that if you sugar binge alone, especially when you are depressed, you will exceed your limits.

Alcohol and more

The usual combination during celebrations is the explosive duo of alcohol and cigarettes. Any lung or cancer specialist will advise you to drop both habits.

Alcohol is a mood drink. It alters the chemical makeup of the brain and allows you to feel relaxed/exhilarated. But the feeling is temporary. When the mood passes, there is a need to drink more or to raise the happiness level.

To do: Drink moderately. Have a full meal while drinking. It is best to drink with others, not alone. Drinking alone will only entice you to finish the bottle. Do not drink when sad unless you can limit yourself to just two drinks. Instead, be with people that can make you laugh.

Cigarette smoking, while accepted socially, has been found to pose health hazards. If you are intent on quitting, try this:

Change your friends if you want to change your habits. Peer pressure will keep you from quitting bad habits unless you all decide to stay clean. This also applies to drug-related habits.

Without the will to change, bad habits are hard to give up, according to Pfizer that conducted decades of research on the challenge of quitting smoking. Did you know that there are 4,000 chemicals in a cigarette? Some have been linked to cancer.

Within 20 minutes of quitting your heart rate normalizes. And within 12 hours, carbon monoxide levels in your body will drop to normal.

Quitting may be easier for others. Some have the power to go cold turkey. Others will require help. With Champix Varenicline Tartrate, there is about an 80-percent chance you could quit the habit.

The oral medication, that needs a doctor's prescription, works on the brain to block an addiction. Though it produces such side effects as nausea and sleeplessness, it remains one of the most promising medications for cigarette smokers eager and willing to quit.

So if you were told you could have a healthier body within 12 weeks, would you not let yourself be converted?

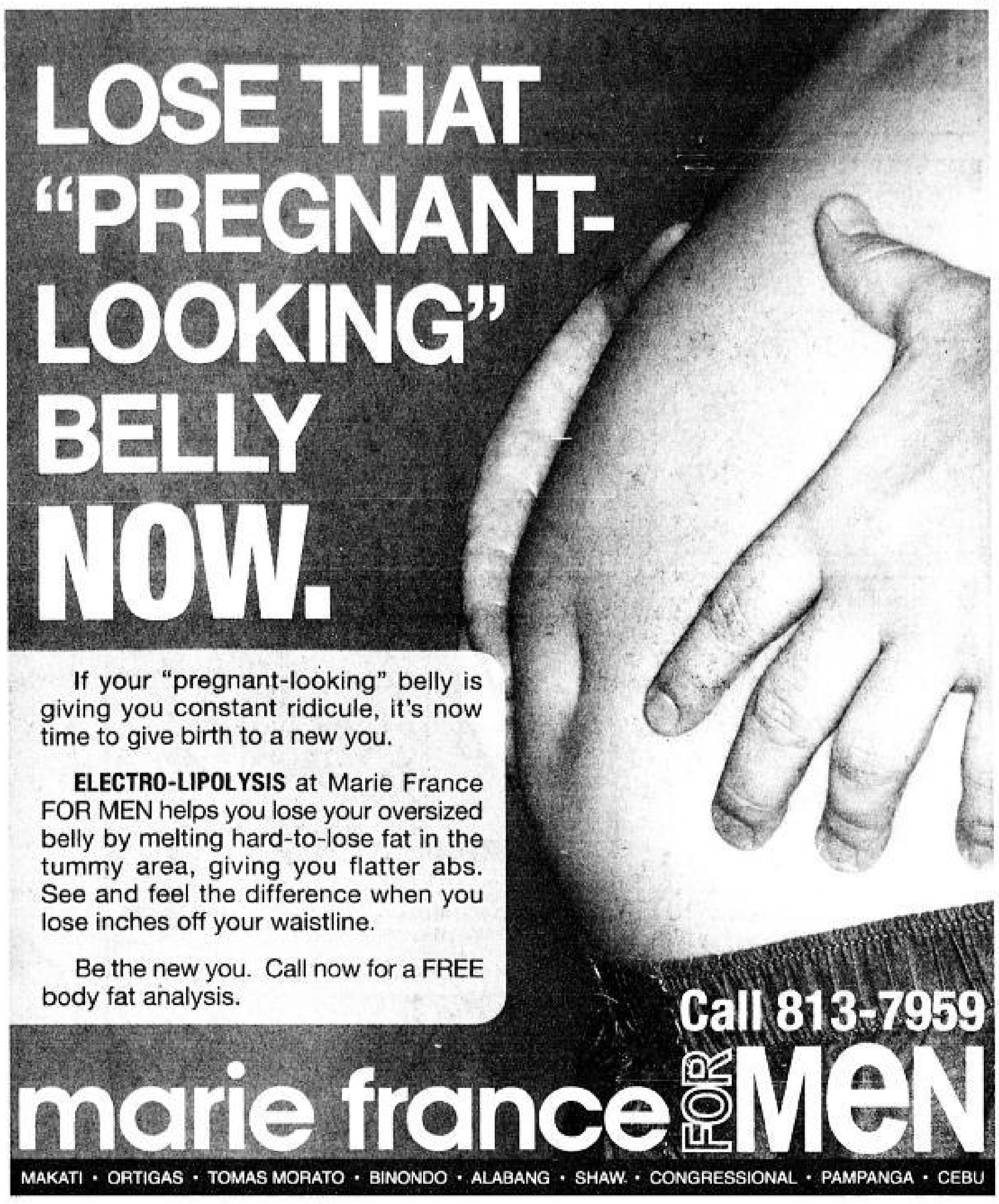
Conversion = liberation

When you transcend your self-imposed limitations, you are literally granting yourself permission to convert to a new way of loving and living. Once you have conversion, then you can fly. Then and only then will you earn your wings.

Love and light!

Celebrate life with Cory Quirino, Nov. 30, at Megamall. Free admission.

Often, the stuff that makes life exciting can be addictive



LOSE THAT "PREGNANT-LOOKING" BELLY NOW.

If your "pregnant-looking" belly is giving you constant ridicule, it's now time to give birth to a new you.

ELECTRO-LIPOLYSIS at Marie France FOR MEN helps you lose your oversized belly by melting hard-to-lose fat in the tummy area, giving you flatter abs. See and feel the difference when you lose inches off your waistline.

Be the new you. Call now for a FREE body fat analysis.

Call 813-7959

marie france FOR MEN

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Hair color inspired by Oriental beauty.

Bigen Silk Touch

WITH SILK PROTEIN AND GINSENG EXTRACT

Show your true color with Bigen Silk Touch. It has silk protein and ginseng extract to make your **Oriental Beauty** shine.

Available in 10 vibrant colors!

NEW

An acclaimed actress, a fast-rising international star and a true embodiment of oriental beauty, Ms. Jesseca Liu uses Bigen Silk Touch Elegant Mahogany (6R).

Jesseca Liu
MediaCorp Artiste

EASY COMB
For even, smooth and easy hair-color application.

SILK PROTEIN
Luxurious and pure, it moisturizes and leaves hair smooth and soft as silk.

GINSENG EXTRACT
For centuries trusted to renew vitality, it nourishes, revitalizes, brings back glossy, healthy sheen and helps provide longer lasting color.

EXHIBIT SCHEDULE:

Metro Gaisano Department Store,
Market! Market! - November 28 - December 2

For every purchase , get FREE Bigen Bag and Bigen Compact Mirror!

Avail the FREE Hair Color Application and win Gift Certificates or Bigen Products!

Per DOH - BFAD Permit No. 1433 Series of 2007

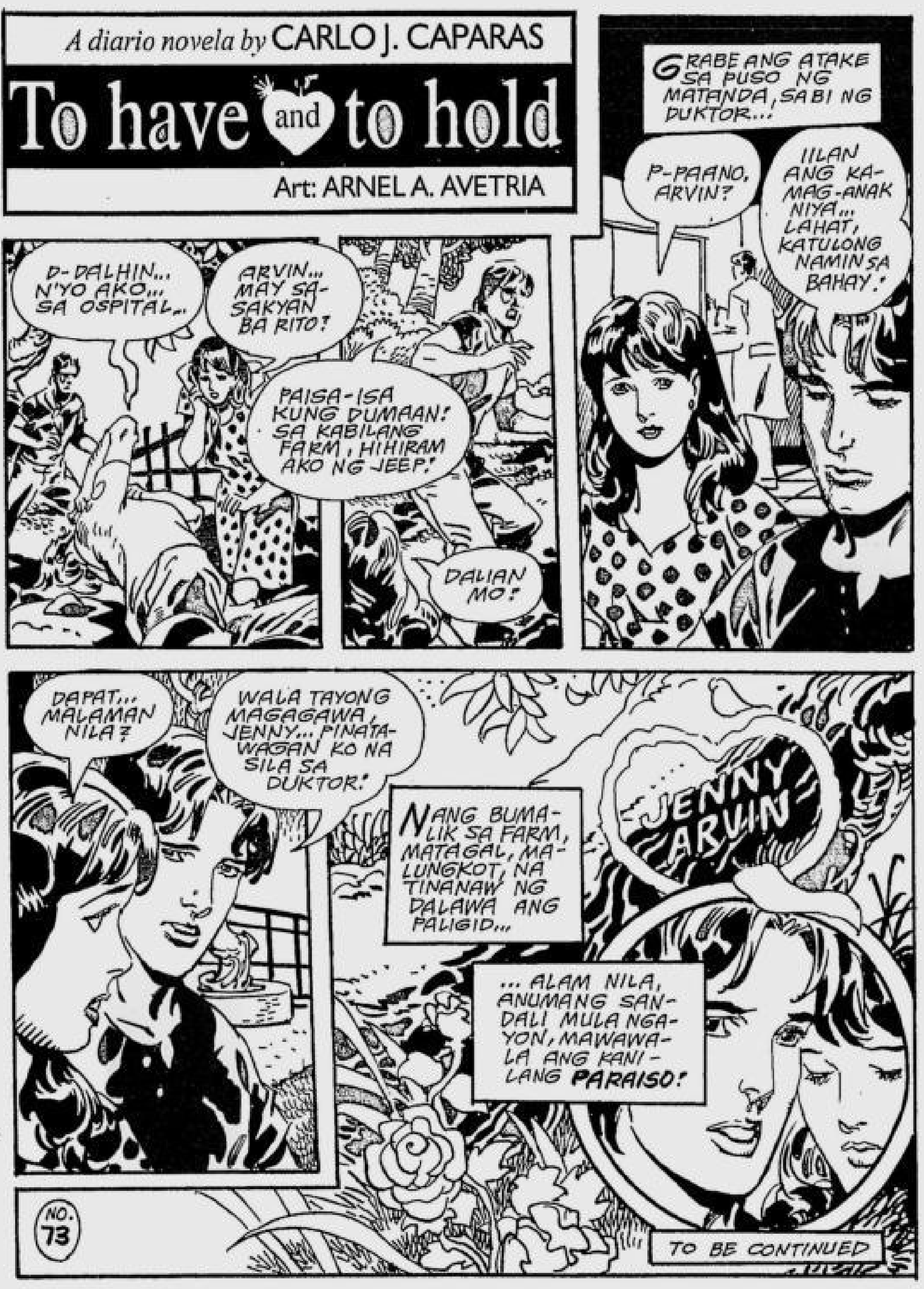
hoyu No.1 hair color in Japan
COLOR YOUR HEART

Available in leading supermarkets, drugstores and beauty shops nationwide.

A diario novela by CARLO J. CAPARAS

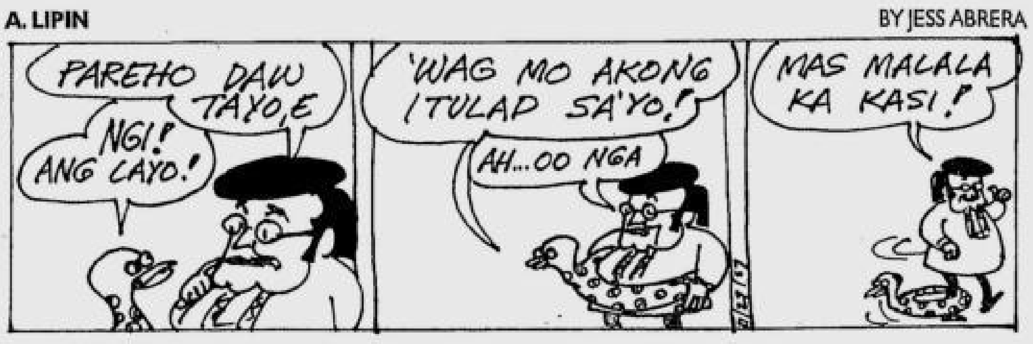
To have and to hold

Art: ARNEL A. AVETRIA


GRABE ANG ATAKE SA PUSO NG MATANDA, SABI NG DUKTOR...
D-DALHIN... N'YO AKO... SA OSPITAL...
ARVIN... MAY SASAKYAN BA RITO?
PAISA-ISA KUNG DUMAAN! SA KABILANG FARM, HIHIRAM AKO NG JEEP!
DALIAN MO!
P-PAANO, ARVIN?
IILAN ANG KAMAG-ANAK NIYA... LAHAT, KATULONG NAMIN SA BAHAY!
DAPAT... MALAMAN NILA?
WALA TAYONG MAGAGAWA, JENNY... PINATAWAGAN KO NA SILA SA DUKTOR!
NANG BUMALIK SA FARM, MATAGAL, MALUNGKOT, NA TINANAW NG DALAWA ANG PALIGID...
JENNY ARVIN
...ALAM NILA, ANUMANG SANDALI MULA NGAYON, MAWAWALA ANG KANILANG PARAISO!
NO. 73
TO BE CONTINUED

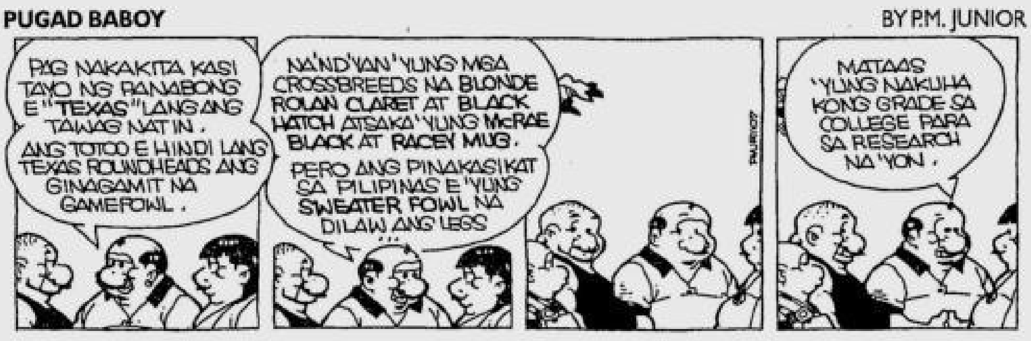
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


PAREHO DAW TAYO, E
NGI! ANG LAYO!
'WAG MO AKONG ITULAD SA'YO!
AH...OO NGA
MAS MALALA KA KASI!

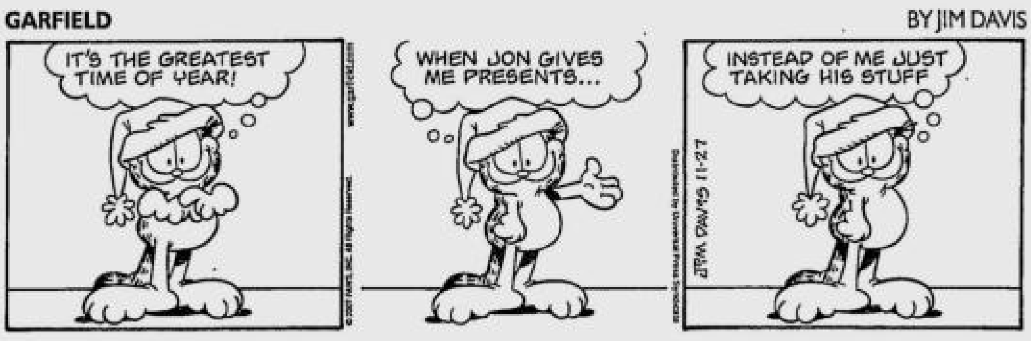
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


PAG NAKAKITA KASI TAYO NG PANABONG E "TEXAS" LANG ANG TAWAG NATIN.
ANG TOTOO E HINDI LANG TEXAS ROUNDHEADS ANG GINAGAMIT NA GAMEFOWL.
NA'ND'YAN 'YUNG MGA CROSSBREEDS NA BLONDE ROLAN CLARET AT BLACK HATCH ATSAKA 'YUNG McRAE BLACK AT RACEY MUG.
PERO ANG PINAKASIKAT SA PILIPINAS E 'YUNG SWEATER FOWL NA DILAW ANG LEGS
MATAAS 'YUNG NAKUHA KONG GRADE SA COLLEGE PARA SA RESEARCH NA 'YON.

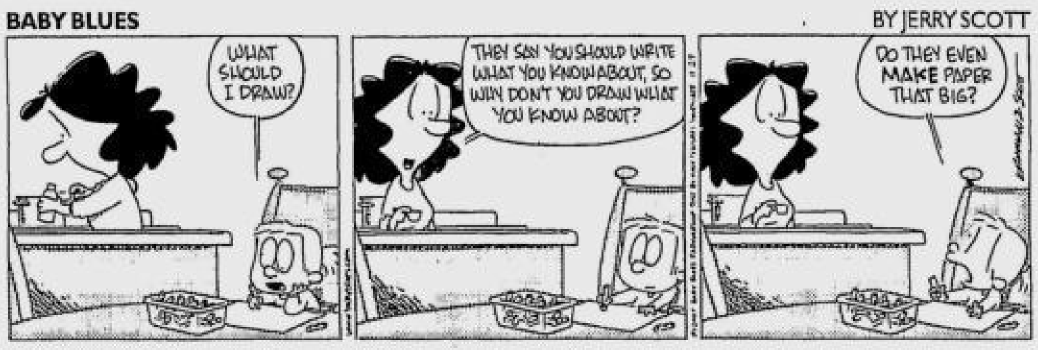
GARFIELD

BY JIM DAVIS


IT'S THE GREATEST TIME OF YEAR!
WHEN JON GIVES ME PRESENTS...
INSTEAD OF ME JUST TAKING HIS STUFF
JIM DAVIS 11-27

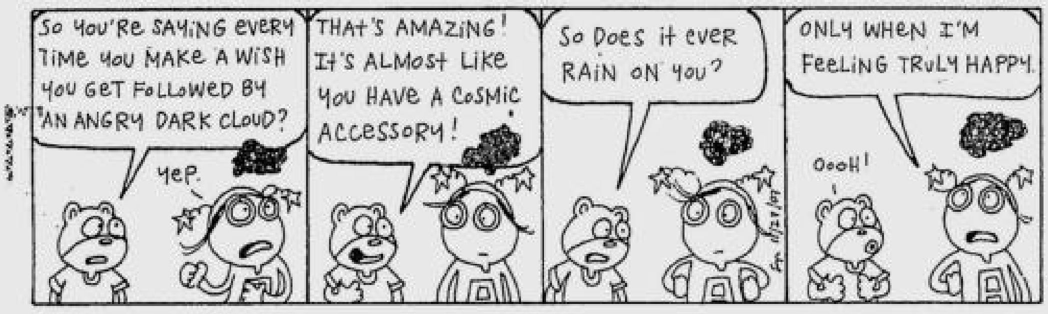
BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


WHAT SHOULD I DRAW?
THEY SAY YOU SHOULD WRITE WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT, SO WHY DON'T YOU DRAW WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT?
DO THEY EVEN MAKE PAPER THAT BIG?

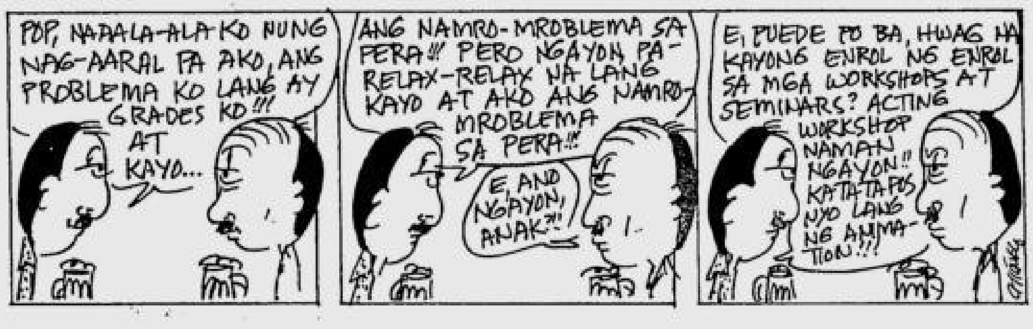
ATOMO AND WEBOY

BY LYRA GARCELLANO


So you're SAYING every Time you MAKE A WiSH you GET FoLLoWED BY AN ANGRY DARK CLOUD?
yep.
THAT'S AMAZING! It'S ALMOST LIKE You HAVE A CoSMIC ACCESSORY!
So Does it ever RAIN ON You?
ONLY WHEN I'M FEELING TRULY HAPPY.
OOOH!

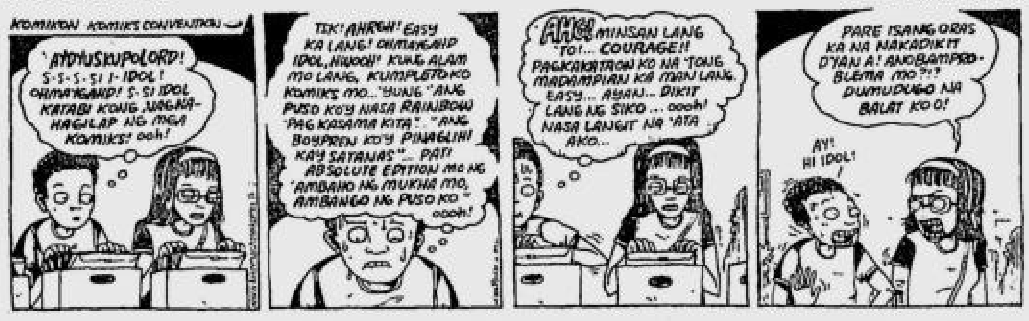
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


POP, NAAALA-ALA KO NUNG NAG-AARAL PA AKO, ANG PROBLEMA KO LANG AY GRADES KO!!! AT KAYO...
ANG NAMRO-MROBLEMA SA PERA!!! PERO NGAYON PA-RELAX-RELAX NA LANG KAYO AT AKO ANG NAMRO-MROBLEMA SA PERA!!!
E, AND NGAYON, ANAK?!
E, PUEDE PO BA, HWAG NA KAYONG ENROL NG ENROL SA MGA WORKSHOPS AT SEMINARS? ACTING WORKSHOP NAMAN NGAYON!! KATATAPOS NYO LANG NG ANIMATION!!!

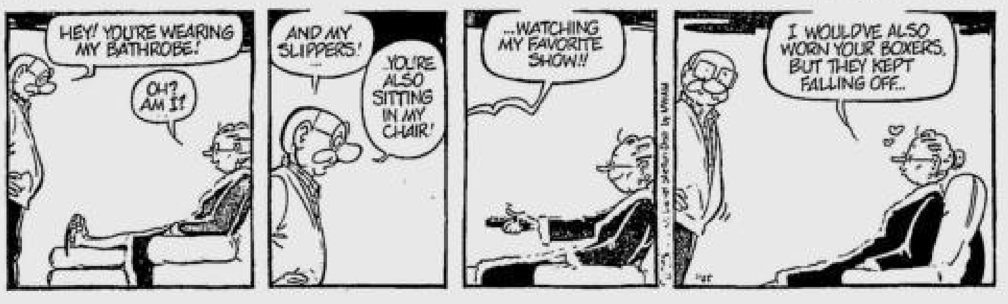
KIKO MACHINE

BY MANIX ABRERA


KOMIKON KOMIKS CONVENTION
AYDYUSKUPOLORD! S-S-S-SI I-IDOL! OHMAYGAHD! S-SI IDOL KATABI KONG NAGHAHAGILAP NG MGA KOMIKS! ooh!
TSK! AHRGH! EASY KA LANG! OHMAYGAHD IDOL, HIHOOH! KUNG ALAM MO LANG, KUMPLETO KO KOMIKS MO... 'YUNG "ANG PUSO KO'Y NASA RAINBOW 'PAG KASAMA KITA"... "ANG BOYPREN KO'Y PINAGLIHI KAY SATANAS"... PATI ABSOLUTE EDITION MO NG "AMBAHO NG MUKHA MO, AMBANGO NG PUSO KO" oooh!
AHGH! MINSAN LANG 'TO!... COURAGE!! PAGKAKATAON KO NA 'TONG MADAMPIAN KA MAN LANG. EASY... AYAN... DIKIT LANG NG SIKO ... oooh! NASA LANGIT NA 'ATA AKO...
PARE ISANG ORAS KA NA NAKADIKIT D'YAN A! ANOBAMPROBLEMA MO?!? DUMUDUGO NA BALAT KO O!
AY! HI IDOL!

BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


HEY! YOU'RE WEARING MY BATHROBE!
OH? AM I?
AND MY SLIPPERS!
...YOU'RE ALSO SITTING IN MY CHAIR!
...WATCHING MY FAVORITE SHOW!!
I WOULD'VE ALSO WORN YOUR BOXERS, BUT THEY KEPT FALLING OFF...

DAILY CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5	6	■	7	8	9	10	■	11	12	13
14						■	15				■	16		
17						18					■	19		
■	■	■	20					■	21		22			
23	24	25		■	26			27	■	28				
29			■	30					31	■	32			
33			34		■	■	35			36			■	■
37					38	39	■	40					41	42
■	■	43					44	■	■	45				
46	47			■	48			49	50		■	51		
52				53	■	54				■	55			
56					57	■	58			59		■	■	■
60			■	61		62						63	64	65
66			■	67				■	68					
69			■	70				■	71					

By Robert H. Wolfe
North Woodmere, NY

11/27/07

ACROSS

1 Actress Andress
7 Gangster's gal
11 Greek X
14 Poem of 14 lines
15 Tony's cousin?
16 Fowl female
17 Motherly command
19 Aerial RRs
20 Plant swelling
21 Doofus
23 Royal ruler
26 __ a one (none)
28 Plumed velvet cap
29 One in Toledo
30 Surgical cutter
32 Hindquarters
33 Use a divining rod
35 "__ Five-O"
37 Rude
40 Wireless devices
43 Computer of 1951
45 Shop machine
46 Against
48 Rushed forward
51 Do-over serve
52 Elevate
54 Laura or Bruce
55 Old assents
56 Be present at
58 TV sound
60 Short life?
61 Motherly command
66 Letters of debt
67 Fencer's sword
68 Discerning
69 Picnic pest
70 Feat
71 Lion, at times

DOWN

1 Amer. ship letters
2 Bunk
3 Commercial word with "Cone" and "Cap"
4 Dismantle mortise joints
5 Licentious
6 Greek goddess
7 Sovereign
8 Sapporo sash
9 The Swedish Nightingale
10 On the up-and-up
11 Motherly command
12 Blimp filler
13 Shoe part
18 Somali supermodel
22 Pat of "Happy Days"
23 African antelope
24 Privy to
25 Motherly command
27 Twelve months
30 First name in denim?
31 One and one
34 Gary of "CSI: New York"
36 "__ Lang Syne"
38 Med. feeders
39 Praise
41 Syngman of Korea
42 TVs
44 Made
46 Saudi __
47 Country
49 Eats
50 Make beloved
53 Finished
55 Blood channel
57 Info
59 Should that be the case
62 Born in Cannes
63 Continental abbr.
64 Fr. holy woman
65 Of a female

Monday's Puzzle Solved

S	P	A	S	■	E	V	E	S	■	F	A	D	E	S
W	A	F	T	■	F	E	S	T	■	O	B	E	S	E
A	C	R	E	■	F	R	A	U	■	C	E	A	S	E
G	E	O	R	G	E	B	U	R	N	S	[illegible]	N	O	M
■	■	■	N	E	T	S	■	G	O	L	E	M	■	■
J	E	J	U	N	E	■	F	E	D	E	R	A	L	S
E	L	E	M	I	■	S	L	O	E	■	A	R	E	A
S	I	R	■	C	L	E	A	N	S	E	■	T	O	G
T	O	R	I	■	A	R	T	S	■	R	U	I	N	G
S	T	Y	L	U	S	E	S	■	D	I	S	N	E	Y
■	■	L	O	R	E	N	■	V	I	C	E	■	■	■
A	P	E	■	G	R	A	C	I	E	A	L	L	E	N
D	O	W	S	E	■	D	A	R	T	■	E	U	R	O
A	L	I	E	N	■	E	P	E	E	■	S	A	I	D
R	E	S	E	T	■	D	O	O	R	■	S	U	E	S

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11/27/07

HOROSCOPE

YOU BORN TODAY: You're extremely active and dynamic. You need excitement and stimulation in your life. That's why you're so impulsive. Fortunately, you can trust your intuition. Freedom is necessary for you. Routine will always frustrate you. You love family and children, and this is where you crave stability. An important choice will arise this year. Choose wisely.

Birthdate of: Jimmy Rollins, baseball shortstop; Jimi Hendrix, guitarist; Michael Vartan, actor.

ARIES (March 21 to April 19): Your focus is on home, family and real estate matters. Discussions with parents are significant. Be patient, because the Moon is at odds with Venus, which makes things a bit stiff and reserved with others.

TAURUS (April 20 to May 20): This is a good day for running around and finishing errands. Short trips, little tasks, shopping and talking with everyone will be the order of the day. Don't sit at home!

GEMINI (May 21 to June 20): Your focus is on your cash flow today. Perhaps you're shopping. Or perhaps you're coming up with moneymaking ideas. Certainly, your ambition to earn money has been stronger than average lately, hasn't it?

CANCER (June 21 to July 22): You might feel more emotional than usual today. This is because the Moon is in your sign. However, things are more inclined to go your way. (You've got the touch!)

LEO (July 23 to Aug. 22): Work alone or behind the scenes today. You need peace and quiet. This is also an excellent day if you have to do any kind of research or find answers to questions.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 to Sept. 22): Group activities will please you today. Conversations with friends, especially female friends, will be pleasing.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 to Oct. 22): Whatever you do today, you will call attention to yourself. Be aware of this. You might want to think more about how you dress and how you act.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 to Nov. 21): You're restless and eager for adventure today. Therefore, get out into the world and try to do something different. Visit libraries, museums or parks. Go for a drive.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 to Dec. 21): This is a good day for discussions about shared property and anything you own jointly with someone else. Tie up loose details connected with insurance matters, inheritances and debt.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 to Jan. 19): You have to go more than halfway when dealing with others today because the Moon today is directly opposite your sign. Just be patient.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 to Feb. 18): This is a good day to shop for sundry items at drugstores, like toothpaste, floss, shampoo and deodorant—whatever. Pet owners will also want to shop for pet-related items.

PISCES (Feb. 19 to March 20): Relax as much as you can today. Enjoy pleasurable activities. Sports and events related to children could be a focus.

CONCEPTIS SU DOKU

Conceptis SudoKu

By Dave Green

9		4	6		7			
						3		
3					2	5	4	
2					4	6		1
				5				
1		6	3					8
	8	9	2					4
		7						
			9		5	2		7

Difficulty Level ★★

11/27

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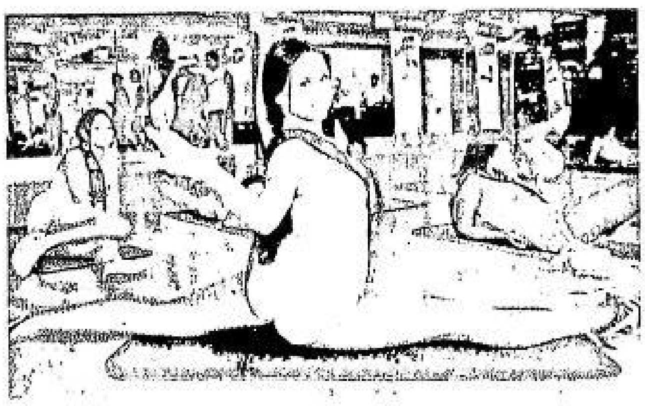
HOW TO PLAY SU DOKU

Fill the grid so that every column, every row and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1 to 9.
Tips and program at www.sudoku.com

Answer to previous puzzle

1	2	5	9	7	6	3	8	4
6	7	8	2	4	3	5	1	9
9	4	3	8	5	1	6	7	2
8	6	7	4	3	9	1	2	5
4	3	2	5	1	8	7	9	6
5	9	1	6	2	7	8	4	3
7	1	6	3	9	4	2	5	8
3	5	9	7	8	2	4	6	1
2	8	4	1	6	5	9	3	7

Difficulty Level ★



MISS Earth contestants had a Body Jam session—a fun, energetic dance exercise where they learned how to kick-box and "hip-hop" for fitness.

Beauty queens share their health secrets

CANDIDATES FOR MISS Earth 2007 took a break from their hectic schedule for a day of fitness and fun during the Nesvita Wellness Day at Fitness First at The Fort.

Nesvita partnered with Fitness First that offers a variety of fitness classes using state-of-the-art facilities. The session gave candidates a one-of-a-kind fitness experience.

During the Nesvita Wellness Day, Miss Earth contestants did some cardio exercises and weight training. They were also treated to a Body Jam session—a fun, energetic dance exercise where they learned how to kick-box and "hip-hop" their way to fitness.

The candidates enjoyed the workout, as they got to sweat it out while grooving to the latest dance tunes.

After the workout, Miss Earth candidates sampled Nesvita's different nutritional variants. As they enjoyed Nesvita Pro-Weight Management milk, zero-percent-fat yogurt and healthy oats, some of the candidates shared their health and beauty secrets.

Miss USA Lisa Marie Forbes believes living healthy is very important. "But one should take it a step at a time. You gradually do more as you build your strength and stamina."

To maintain her fit and svelte figure, Miss USA eats foods that are low in fat. She complements her healthy diet with weight training and cardio exercises.

For Miss Ukraine Galyna Andreeva, a combination of healthy diet and proper exercise is the way to go.

"I choose only healthy foods like fresh fruits and vegetables. I also drink lots of water. I love dancing, which is a fun yet healthy way to exercise."

For these beauties, milk is an important part of their diet.

Miss Lithuania Monika Baliunaite says, "Milk provides my body with all the nutrients that I need to maintain my weight."

MISS Guatemala Jessica Scheel Noyola

MISS Ukraine Galyna Andreeva

Miss Guatemala Jessica Scheel Noyola agrees. "Milk gives me the calcium I need to strengthen my bones and give me good posture."

The beauty contestants also think oats and cereals play an important role in achieving good health.

Miss Switzerland Stefanie Gossweiler makes it a point to include oats in her diet. "Oats are a good source of fiber that helps cleanse my body. That's why I make sure to have it for breakfast."

Trina Abola, Nesvita consumer marketing team leader, said, "Partnering with the Miss Earth pageant gives us the opportunity to educate people on wellness and harmony around the world. Through the Nesvita Wellness Day, Miss Earth candidates not only got to prepare for the much-anticipated beauty pageant, but also inspired other people to adopt a healthy lifestyle as well."

MISS USA Lisa Marie Forbes complements her healthy diet with weight tr[illegible]ng, cardio exercises.

Football is alive and kicking

WHO SAYS FOOTBALL IS NOT POPULAR in the Philippines?

Not the more than 20,000 people who trooped to the recent two-day Alaska Cup 2007 held at the Alabang Country Club Fields, Ayala Alabang.

More than 250 teams and 3,500 players from Davao, Bacolod, Cebu, Iloilo, Baguio, Subic, Olongapo, Pampanga, Rizal, Cavite, Batangas, Laguna and the best schools and clubs in Metro Manila participated.

Local soccer fans got a glimpse of international-caliber football when Ezo El Habid, who was Most Valuable Player, led defending champion Baguio Tiger Football Club to victory in the Men's Open category.

Tamasak Football Club of Iloilo, led by MVP Roynick Bernardo, beat Sacred Heart Cebu, who settled for second, in the Boys 10. Ateneo de Davao was third and Cebu International School was fourth.

Ateneo de Davao, with MVP Erika Turtur, topped the Girls 12. De la Salle Zobel was second; Makati Football Club (Makati FC), third; and Cebu IS, fourth. Ateneo beat De la Salle Zobel, 4-1, with Alexi Nina Arrieta, Shannen Gapate and Ana Aguilo scoring goals.

Tournament director Tomas Lozano, said he felt happy to have helped 3,500 football players have fun and enjoy themselves.

The Alaska Football Cup is sponsored by the Alaska Milk Corporation, headed by Wilfred Steven Uytengsu, president; and Joaquin Trillo, sports development manager.

Stefanie Pheasant powered De la Salle University past University of the Philippines Diliman in the Ladies Open. Makati FC won in most categories. It was in first place in Boys 16, Girls 16, Boys 19, Boys 14 and Boys 12.

Makati Football School, behind MVP Fares Sorial, won in the Boys 8 over Tamasak. Ateneo de Davao was third and Don Bosco Pampanga fourth.

In the Boys 16, Xavier FC was in second place; Brent IS, third; and Ateneo de Davao, fourth. MVP was Jacobo Lorenzo of Makati FC. In the Girls 16, in second place was British School; third, Davao United; and fourth, Cebu IS. MVP was Giorgia Guidicelli, Makati FC.

THE TAMASAK Football Club from Iloilo, center of football in the Philippines, won the Boys 10 category.

In the Boys 14, in second place was Xavier Alumni FC; third, FC Dabaw; and fourth, Brent Mamplasan. MVP was Gabriel Vorbeck of Makati FC. In the Boys 12, in second place was De la Salle Antipolo; third, Tamasak Iloilo; and fourth, Ateneo de Davao. Kieran Bellew of Makati FC was MVP.

Alabang Football School won in the Players 6. Futbol Funtatics was in second place; De la Salle Zobel, third; and Makati Football School, fourth. Maona Chavanon of Alabang FS was MVP.

In the Men's Open, Veterans Football Club took home the second prize, De la Salle University, third; and Nomads FC, fourth. The Baguio Ladies was in third place in the Ladies Open, while University of Santo Tomas was fourth.

De la Salle Zobel won in the Girls 14; Ateneo de Davao, second; Flames FC, third and Makati FC, fourth.

De la Salle University was second in Boys 19; De la Salle Zobel, third; and Xavier Alumni FC, fourth.

MOANA Shavanon (right) of the Alabang Football School won MVP honors in the under age group.

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By merging high capacity with low energy consumption and efficient electric discharge, the result is a longer battery. Plus with InfoLithium batteries, you can see remaining minutes of battery life on the LCD screen, letting you exchange batteries at your convenience.
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Compact Storage Media: AVCHD MS
For Longer Recording: AVCHD HDD
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PROMO PERIOD: NOVEMBER 15, 2007 TO JANUARY 20, 2008

GORGEOUS Samantha Eduque and Wyngard Tracy

JOY BUENSALIDO and daughter Monique

MOI **flanked by Citibank marketing director Cecille Fonacier and Rustan's adorable southern lady Nena Vargas Tantoco**

Any fresher and
you'd have to plant
pick them yours
Go ahead...
Get F

CITIBANK country business manager Mark Jones with wife Jennie, and Rustan's Crickette and Donnie Tantoco

A fresh, midnight treat for a privileged few

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH

Maurice Arcache

Photos by Alex Van Hagen using **Kodak** EasyShare system

MOI NEVER HAD SO MUCH FUN going to a grocery than I did that evening, when Rustan's Fresh Supermarket opened its doors from 8 p.m. until midnight exclusively to tons of Citibank Gold and Platinum cardholders, *palanggas*.

What awaited the privileged few? Check this out: free groceries in a recyclable bag, complimentary rolls of rye bread, waived parking fees and fantastic discounts of as much as 50 percent on chilled Australian beef and lamb, premium seafood items, as well as loads of buy-one-take-one offers and so much more, *palanggas*.

Hours before the official start of the event, Citibank cardholders gathered outside, the lines extending to the entire Rustan's Supermarket block, would you believe?

Tall, dashing **Mark Jones**, Citibank's mega country business manager, happily checked out the mob with his *tres charmante* wife **Jennie**, together with Rustan's young power couple **Donnie Tantoco** and eye-catching wife with the four B's **Crickette Yu T.**, no less, dahlings.

Mark J. said: "We realize people do their grocery shopping as close to home as possible for convenience so we invited cardholders who work or live in the area. We are looking forward to replicating the success of this affair in other communities. With Rustan's generous assistance, this sale really delivered on that promise."

Though the queues were long—and I mean long—at the payment counters, even way past midnight, shoppers continued to fill two or three pushcarts, paying for their purchases with their Citibank cards.

Imagine shopping till you dropped while sipping wine or booze and nibbling on delicious canapés. Now that's really hard to beat, *palanggas*.

No wonder that happening was such a tremendous success. The next hot sale night will be at Rustan's Supermarket Fresh at Shangri-La Mall, Edsa on Nov. 28. And yes, dahlings, this is only from Citibank and Rustan's Fresh.

Celebrating originality

It was a star-studded occasion hosted by one of the world's premier sports brands. Adidas launched its newest Originals Concept store at upscale TriNoma, *palanggas*.

Celebrating the event were television personalities **Angel Aquino**, **Nancy Castiglione** and local R&B sensation **Kris Lawrence**. Of course, famed Adidas athletes and sportscasters did not miss such an occasion.

Sportscasters **Bill Velasco** and **Jude Turcuato**, together with hot professional basketball players **Larry Fonacier**, **Wesley Gonzales** and **Enrico Villanueva**, all witnessed the one-of-a-kind store launch, dahlings.

True to Adidas original style, the event had tons of exciting and unique activities. Hosted by sportscasters **George Rocha** and **Lia Cruz**, with Magic 89.9 DJs **Sam YG**, **Slick Rick and Tony Tony**, the program opened with a series of performances.

Highlight of the event was the awarding of winners in the month-long photo contest with the theme, "Me and my Adidas Originals: Celebrate Originality."

Judges included Adidas CFO **Joel Orense**; Viktor Jeans owner **Ino Caluza**; Adidas Originals brand ambassadors Nancy and Angel; Maxim Philippines editor **Rovilson Fernandez**; and Adidas managing director **Joey Singian** who announced the winners.

Emil Perez and **Jen Ledesma** each received a one-year supply of Adidas Originals Kicks for their winning photos, "Evolution" and "Woman's Best Friend." **Joseph Rocamora** won a half year supply of Adidas Originals footwear.

Proving to be a true fashionista destination, with tons of limited-edition products, the TriNoma Adidas Originals Concept Store also carries limited-edition Adidas-inspired Viktor jeans design by Ino C., dahlings.

The Adidas Originals Concept Store is at 2/F, TriNoma, QC.

Outstanding airline

For exemplary performance in the aviation industry, Asian Spirit Airlines was named Most Outstanding Airline during the 15th Annual Asia Pacific Excellence Awards (Apea).

Receiving the award at the Philippine Stock Exchange Tower in Ortigas Center, Pasig, from Apea's **Nordiana Rahim**, co-chair, and **James Lee-Valentine**, chair, was no less than **Noel Oñate**, hotshot chair of Asian Spirit.

Bazaar south of Manila

Take note, all you bazaar goers. This one is a must-go-to, *palanggas*, Nov. 30- Dec. 2, at Cuenca Community Center and St. James Parking Lot, Ayala, Alabang.

It is going to be the biggest one yet in terms of the number of concessionaires—with more than 500, dahlings.

The variety of products is so enormous you will be able to complete your Christmas shopping list.

Manufacturers, exporters, importers and traders from all over the Philippines, from north to south, are participating.

A food pavilion will feature well-known eateries while prizes in the grand raffle include TV sets, DVD players and other valuable items.

Major sponsors include Purefoods, Unilever, Absolute Vodka, Fundador, Coca-Cola, Viva Mineral Water, Mega Publishing, *palanggas*.

CITIBANK'S Mon del Rosario, Sonya Perez and Francis Caberoy

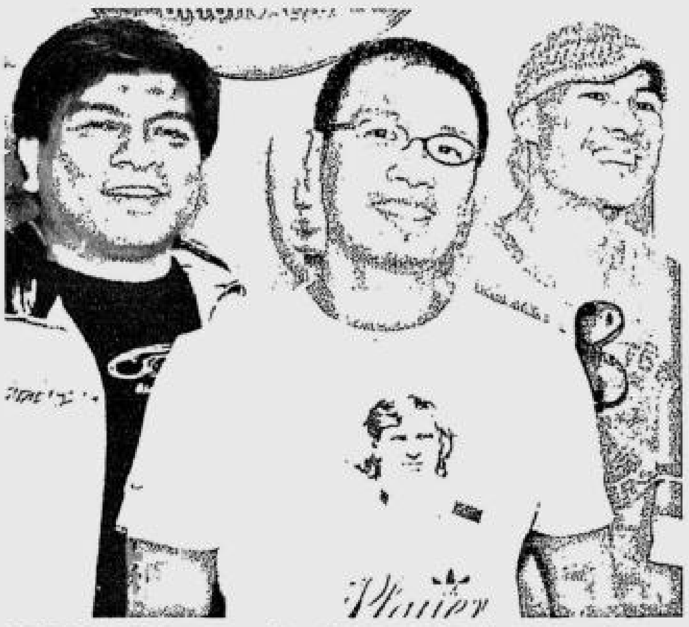
ALMA Gruenberg and Bea Teh-Tan

AYALA Mall's hot women achievers Rowena Tomeldan and Cora Dizon

AYALA Malls' AC Ocampo

ST. JAMES bazaar committee members: Edza Gonzales, Msgr. Ernie Joaquin, Ricky Presa and Titang Montinola. Standing: mother and daughter Mimi and Nikki Valerio

APEA'S Nordiana Rahim and James Lee-Valentine with Asian Spirit's Noel Oñate



ADIDAS' JOEL Orense and Joey Singian with Rovilson Fernandez

TV PERSONALITIES and Adidas ambassadors Angel Aquino and Nancy Castiglione

MODEL and **TV** personality Brad Turvey

R&B singer Kris Lawrence

MAGICIAN Conrad Alampay with Adidas' Mitch Averia and Pamela So

ADIDAS photo-contest winner Emil Perez with his "Evolution"

JEN LEDESMA shows off her winning photo "Woman's Best Friend."

MAGIC 89.9 DJ Slick Rick, Adidas' Goody Custodio, Bill Velasco and Bebong Muñoz

BASKETBALL players Enrico Villanueva, Wesley Gonzalez and Larry Fonacier

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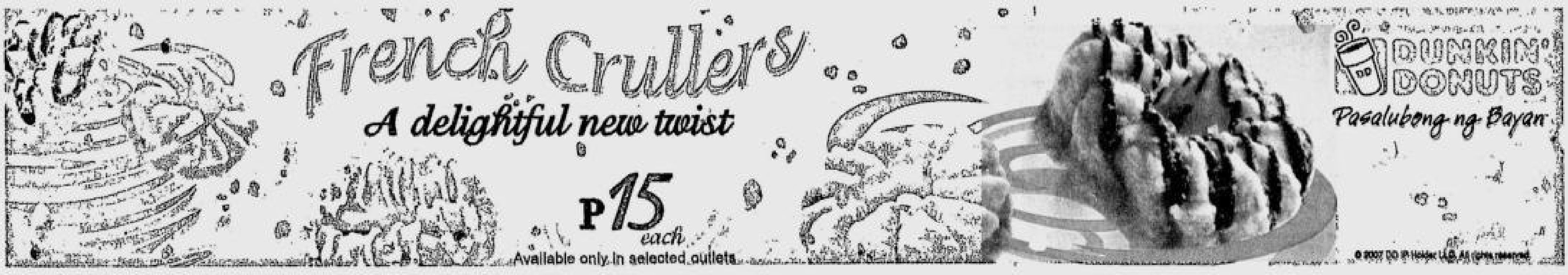
- **More Christmas carols for feuding celebs** Dollywood/E6
- **Piolo and Sam: What's all the fuss?** Feedback/E5



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Film on teachers Sundance-bound

But Ramona Diaz's 'The Learning' hasn't found enough local supporters

DOROTEA Godinez and husband Herbert get ready for an interview, while director Ramona Diaz checks the camera.

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

PHOTO COURTESY OF CINE DIAZ INC.

THE IRONY IS NOT lost on Tony Gloria, head of Unitel Pictures.

Although Ramona Diaz's new documentary "The Learning" has attracted grants from abroad, it has yet to ink deals with local sponsors apart from Unitel.

The documentary, which focuses on a group of Filipino schoolteachers who have migrated to Baltimore, is subsidized by Unitel, the Center for Asian-American Media and the Sundance Institute Documentary Fund.

Diaz, whose previous docu "Imelda" won Best Cinematography at the 2004 Sundance Film Festival, is considered an alumna of that top US indie film fest, said Gloria.

"The initial research and development was sponsored by Sundance," recalled Gloria, executive producer. "Then Unitel came in to help finish the film. It's been very difficult. With very little resources, Ramona shot for a year and a half."

In an interview last June, Diaz told INQUIRER Entertainment that she was open to the idea of more financiers coming in.

Tito Velasco, chief operating officer of Unico Entertainment, told the INQUIRER last Saturday that the docu is currently in the middle of "offline editing," keeping in step with the Sundance timetable.

January preem

It is scheduled to premiere in Sundance late January next year.

"We have a new 10-minute work-in-progress [demo reel] that is very good," Velasco noted, adding that talks with prospective sponsors are ongoing.

In spite of the obstacles, Diaz remained focused in chronicling the life stories of teachers Rhea Espedido, Mary Angel Alim, Dorotea Godinez, Grace Amper, among others.

Last June, Diaz documented these teachers' homecomings in their respective provinces—Cebu, Sorsogon, Rizal, Cagayan de Oro.

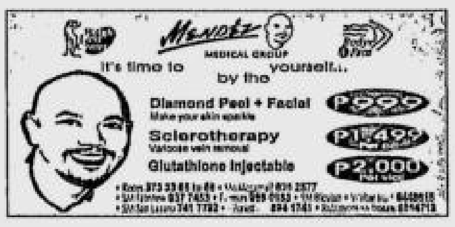
"Their stories are very compelling," Diaz noted. In the end, she recalled, the teachers became diligent in informing the filmmaker of the latest goings-on in their lives.

Gloria feels strongly about this docu. "There have been many articles and TV shows done on Filipino teachers abroad. But there's never been a docu that followed teachers for almost two years."

"*Babad kami sa mga ekuwelahan* (We were immersed in the schools)," Diaz quipped. Some of the students agreed to be part of the movie; the others refused. "We didn't force them."

Gloria pointed out that while previous attempts to tell the OFW story, especially in feature films, were

FILM/ E2



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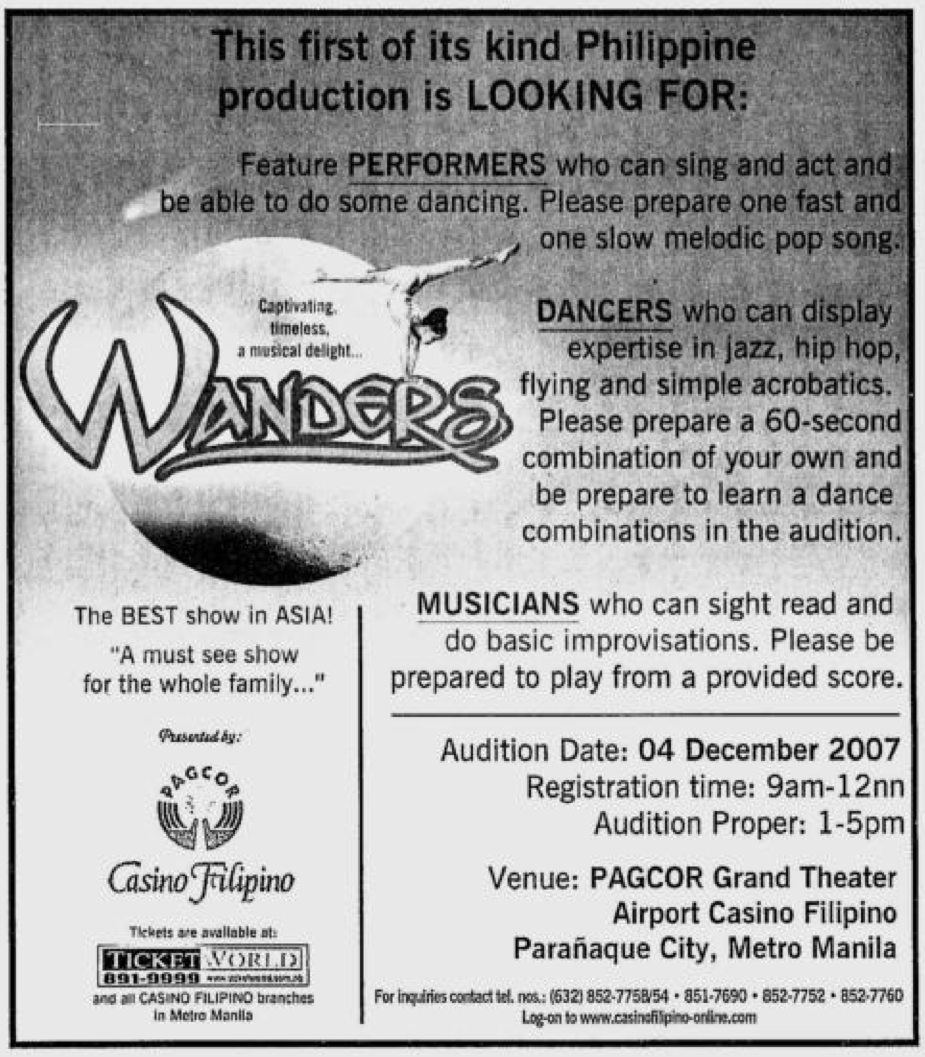

This first of its kind Philippine production is LOOKING FOR:

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Hairloss is wrecking her life and she doesn't know why.

Thinning hair makes a woman look older. When your hair's health, shine and bounce weaken, it seems your personality is likewise affected. Self-consciousness, diminished self-esteem, even bouts of depression may occur.

Most women who have gone through this harrowing experience say they tried everything to stop hairloss, from special treatments at the salon, to a whole range of over-the-counter products. But nothing worked. Sadly, many "remedies" may have actually made the condition worse. Until they found out the reason why they were losing hair, little could be done to end the problem.

Possible reasons for hairloss.

Women's hairloss can be caused by hormonal changes. Female Pattern Baldness (or Androgenetic Alopecia) is a reaction to male hormones in the body (androgens) which can weaken a woman's hair. Other factors can be stress, poor nutrition, illnesses and reaction to certain medications, childbirth and menopause, frequent coloring, curling, straightening, and many more. Most causes of hairloss, when they are correctly identified, can be treated with good results.

Getting the facts on why you are losing hair.

Trichology is the study of the functions and problems of hair. A trichologist is someone who has been educated in the subject and is qualified to determine the reasons why your hair is not in good health.

Where do you find a trichologist? One name that has been synonymous with Professional Trichology in the Philippines for more than 25 years: Svenson. Svenson trichologists will examine your hair and scalp and give you advice on what to do.

A trichologist - what does it cost?

Nothing. Svenson trichologists offer an in-depth Hair & Scalp analysis totally free of charge.

Pre-hairloss symptoms.

Before your hair starts falling out, be aware of early warning signs such as persistent dandruff, flaking, and scalp irritations. Beat hairloss - see a trichologist when you see these signs!

These visible indications are embarrassing, and when combined with dirt in the atmosphere, shampoo chemicals or excess oiliness, they can block follicles, badly affecting hair growth.

Treatments to help your hair.

Depending on the findings of your Hair & Scalp analysis, you can decide on treatment programs including:

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GALLERIA

[illegible]

1 BOOGEYMAN 2 • THX
1:00 3:00 5:00 7:30AS

2 ONE MORE CHANCE
12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 9:50

3 ANIMAHENASYON:
2007 Pinoy Animation Festival

4 GAME PLAN
1:00 3:10 5:20 7:30AS

5 HITMAN
1:15 3:25 5:35 7:45 10:00

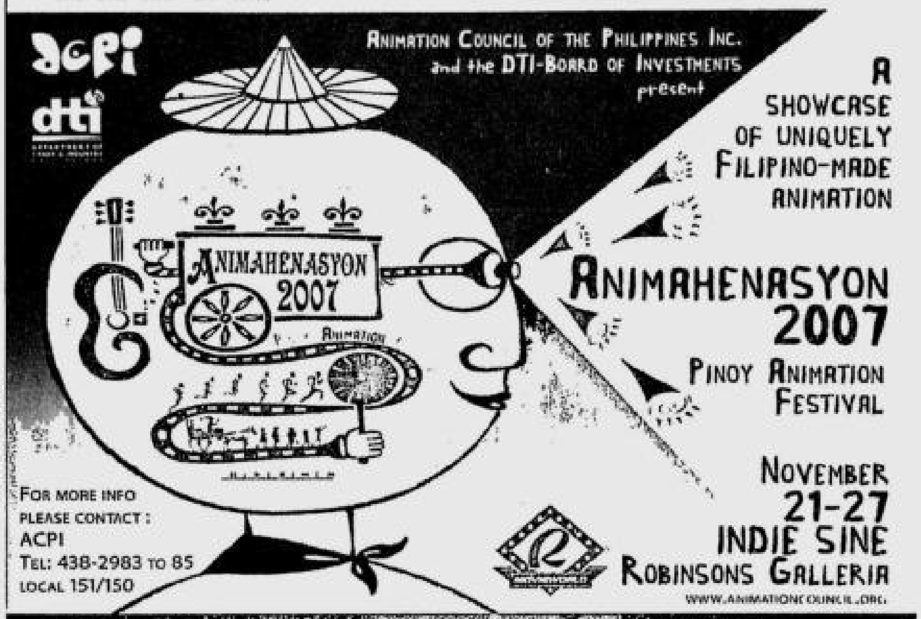
6 ENCHANTED
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00

7 GREEN PARADISE
12:40 3:00 5:20 7:40 10:00

8 THE NANNY DIARIES
1:25 3:30 5:35 7:40 9:45

9 ENCHANTED
2:00 4:30 7:00 9:30

10 BEOWULF
12:00 2:30 5:00 7:30 10:00



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2 indieSine: TRIBU
12:50 2:40 4:30 6:20 8:10 10:00

3 ENCHANTED
11:35 1:55 4:15 6:35 9:00

4 GREEN PARADISE
12:50 2:40 4:30 6:20 8:10 10:00

5 BEOWULF
10:10 12:30 2:50 5:10 7:30 10:00

6 THE NANNY DIARIES
12:00 2:00 4:00 6:00 8:00 10:00

7 BOOGEYMAN 2
12:50 2:40 4:30 6:20 8:10 10:00

Midtown

1 GAME PLAN
12:35 2:55 5:15 7:35 10:00

2 ENCHANTED
12:50 3:10 5:30 7:50 10:00

3 HITMAN
11:15 1:25 3:35 5:45 7:55 10:00

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12:50 2:50 4:50 6:50 9:00

2 ONE MORE CHANCE
11:00 1:30 4:00 6:30 9:00

3 THE NANNY DIARIES
1:00 3:00 5:00 7:00 9:00

4 ENCHANTED
11:25 1:50 4:15 6:40 9:05

5 GAME PLAN 12:30 2:40
LIONS FOR LAMBS 5:00 7:00 9:00

6 BEOWULF
1:05 3:35 6:20 9:00

7 HITMAN
11:50 2:10 4:30 6:50 9:10

8 GREEN PARADISE
12:10 2:25 4:40 6:55 9:10

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1 ONE MORE CHANCE
2 BEOWULF
3 ENCHANTED
4 HITMAN

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2 HITMAN
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 ENCHANTED

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3 GREEN PARADISE
4 ENCHANTED
5 ONE MORE CHANCE

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3 GHOST SON
4 GREEN PARADISE
5 30 DAYS OF NIGHT

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2 BEOWULF
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 ENCHANTED
5 GREEN PARADISE

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1 GREEN PARADISE
2 BEOWULF
3 HITMAN
4 ENCHANTED
5 ONE MORE CHANCE
6 GAME PLAN

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1 BEOWULF
2 ONE MORE CHANCE
3 ENCHANTED
4 HITMAN

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2 APAT DAPAT DAPAT APAT
3 RENDITION

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3 indieSine: PAIN THINGS
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5 BALLS OF FURY
6 GHOST SON

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2 ONE MORE CHANCE
3 ATAUL FOR RENT
4 ENCHANTED
5 LUST CAUTION
6 GHOST SON

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2 HITMAN
3 BEOWULF
4 ONE MORE CHANCE

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1 BEOWULF
2 ENCHANTED
3 HITMAN
4 ONE MORE CHANCE

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3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 ENCHANTED
5

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1 GREEN PARADISE
2 ENCHANTED
3 HITMAN
4 ONE MORE CHANCE

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2 LIONS FOR LAMBS
3 30 DAYS OF NIGHT

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Pacific Mall Lucena Tel (042) 660-5271

1 ONE MORE CHANCE
2 ENCHANTED
3
4

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 GAME PLAN
2 ONE MORE CHANCE
3 BEOWULF
4 HITMAN
5 ENCHANTED
6 HITMAN
7 ENCHANTED
8 RESERVED
9 ONE MORE CHANCE
10 GREEN PARADISE

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Sumulong Highway cor. Mayor Gil Fernando Street, Sto. Niño, Marikina City tel. 9341927

1 HITMAN
2 GREEN PARADISE
3 ENCHANTED
4 ONE MORE CHANCE

SUPER CINERAMA
Isetann Cinerama Complex Recto
tel 7334228

1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 ONE MORE CHANCE
5 BEOWULF

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1 ONE MORE CHANCE
2 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
3 GHOST SON
4

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1 ONE MORE CHANCE
2 ENCHANTED
3 GREEN PARADISE

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1 ENCHANTED
2 ONE MORE CHANCE

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1 ENCHANTED
2 HITMAN
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 BEOWULF

Centre Plaza Cinema
(Balanga, Bataan) tel (047) 237.7007

1 ONE MORE CHANCE
2 THE SEEKER: DARK IS RISING

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1 BEOWULF
2 ENCHANTED
3 HITMAN
4 ONE MORE CHANCE

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1 ENCHANTED
2 ONE MORE CHANCE
3 BEOWULF
4

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1 RESERVED
2 RESERVED
3 RESERVED
4 RESERVED

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1 ONE MORE CHANCE
2 ENCHANTED
3 30 DAYS OF NIGHT

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(Tarlac) tel (045) 982.1729

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2 LUST CAUTION
3 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
4 BALLS OF FURY

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1 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
2 ONE MORE CHANCE
3 ENCHANTED

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1 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
2 ONE MORE CHANCE

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1 UNREST
2 GREEN PARADISE

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 UNREST
2 NAKAW NA SANDALI
3 KANGKONG
4 GREEN PARADISE

Lianas MovieCity
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1 ONE MORE CHANCE
2 TUKSO
3 ENCHANTED
4 GREEN PARADISE
5 ATAUL FOR RENT

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1 ENCHANTED
2 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
3 GREEN PARADISE
4 ONE MORE CHANCE

Berma Cinema
(Baclaran) tel 879.2030 / 879.2029

1 GREEN PARADISE
2

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Film on teachers…

From page E1

basically "romanticized and fictionalized," "The Learning" presents these teachers' reality, warts and all.

"Ramona followed them from recruitment to their first vacation as *balikbayan*. These are the stories we don't see in the movies," he explained.

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HITMAN R13 1:30,3:45,6:00, 8:15,10:30	ENCHANTED G 1:00,3:20,5:40,8:00	NANNY DIARIES G 12:40,3:00

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① ENCHANTED
MTRCB GP
12:30, 3:20, 6:10, 9:00

② HITMAN
MTRCB R-13 12:20
2:45, 5:10, 7:35, 10:00

③ BEOWULF
MTRCB PG-13
2:00, 4:40, 7:20, 10:00

④ ONE MORE CHANCE
MTRCB PG-13
1:30, 4:10, 6:50, 9:30

PREMIERE THEATRE
ENCHANTED (GP)
1:00, 3:50, 6:40, 9:30

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10:40, 1:25, 4:10
6:55, 9:40
GP

CINEMA 2 BEOWULF
11:40, 2:25, 5:10
7:55, 10:35
PG-13

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CINEMA 3 ONE MORE CHANCE
11:30, 2:15, 5:00
7:45, 10:30
PG-13

CINEMA 4 HITMAN
10:30, 12:50, 3:10
5:30, 7:50, 10:10
R-13

CINEMA 5 ENCHANTED
11:15, 2:05, 4:50
7:35, 10:20
GP

TICKET PRICES & SCREENING TIME SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE. FOR CINEMA INQUIRIES, CALL: 722 4496.

MUSIC MUSEUM	Nov. 30, Dec 01, 7 & 8, 2007	"Into the Woods" musical	8:00 PM
	December 14, 2007	Mark Herras	8:00 PM
	December 15, 2007	The Company	8:00 PM
TEATRINO PROMENADE GREENHILLS	Nov. 28, 29 and Dec. 04, 2007	Cerrudo Classico	8:00 PM

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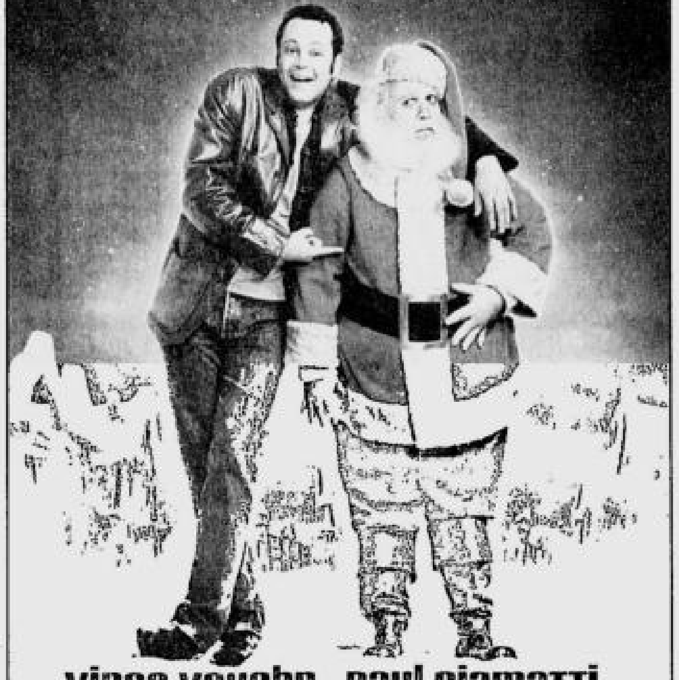

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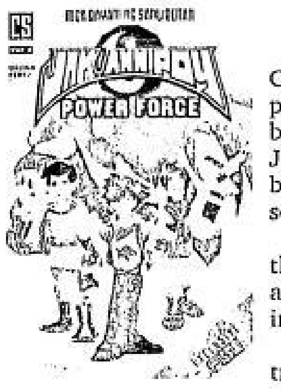

JAK ANN POY
POWER FORCE

New 'komiks' heroes

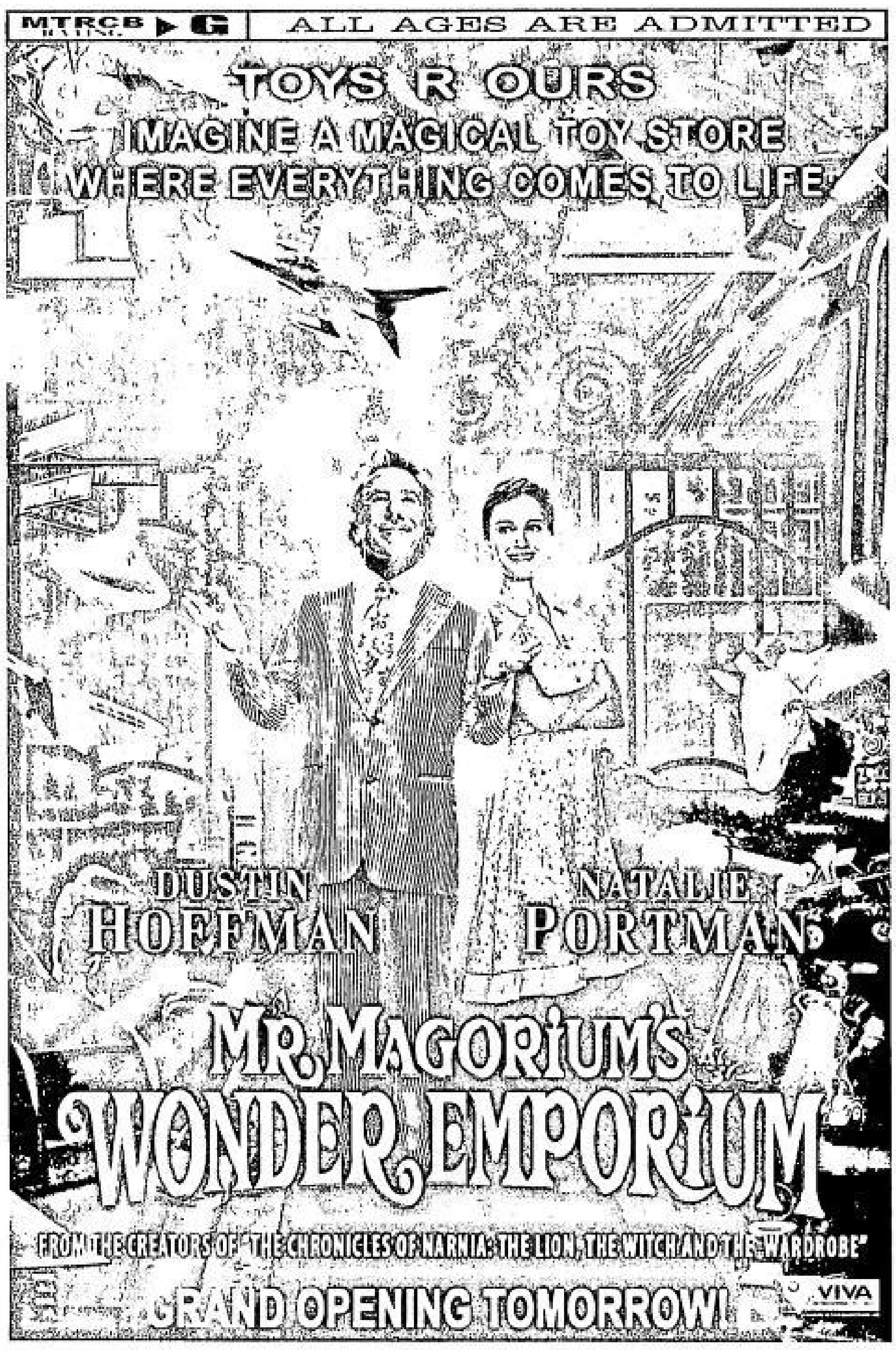
CINDO STUDIOS, AN INDEPENDENT publisher of comic books, has released the series Jak, Ann, Poy: Powerforce, based on the rock, paper and scissors game or *jack en poy*.

Rod Rodriguez created the series, with Jann Galino and Eugene Perez Jr. providing the illustrations.

The Pinoy comic book introduces a new breed of characters and a new story distinct from such Filipinized super heroes like Gagamboy and Lastikman, who are both based on foreign creations.

The company announced that it will distribute free copies of its first issue in Metro Manila, Cebu and Davao.

For inquiries, call 750-5432.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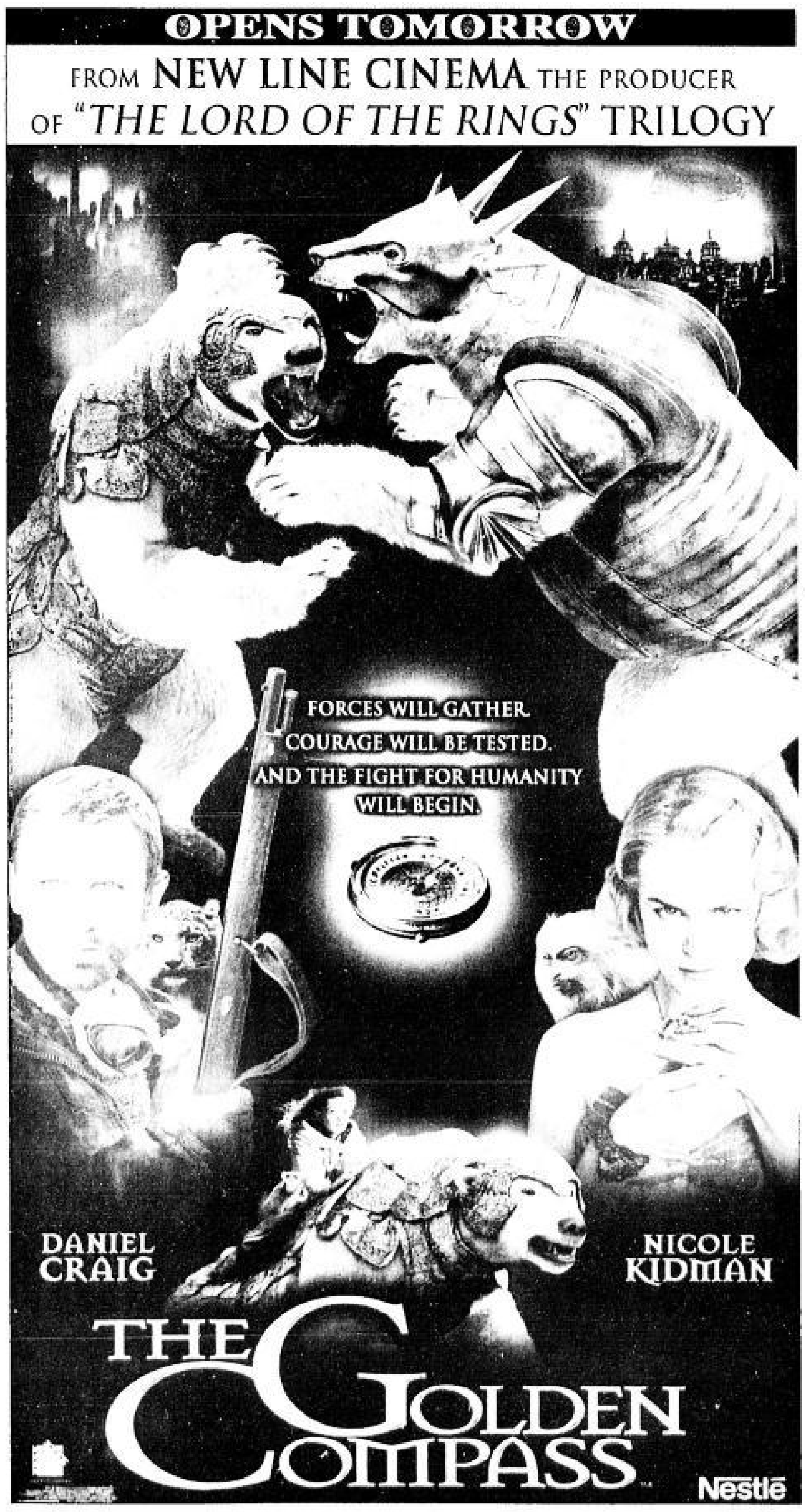
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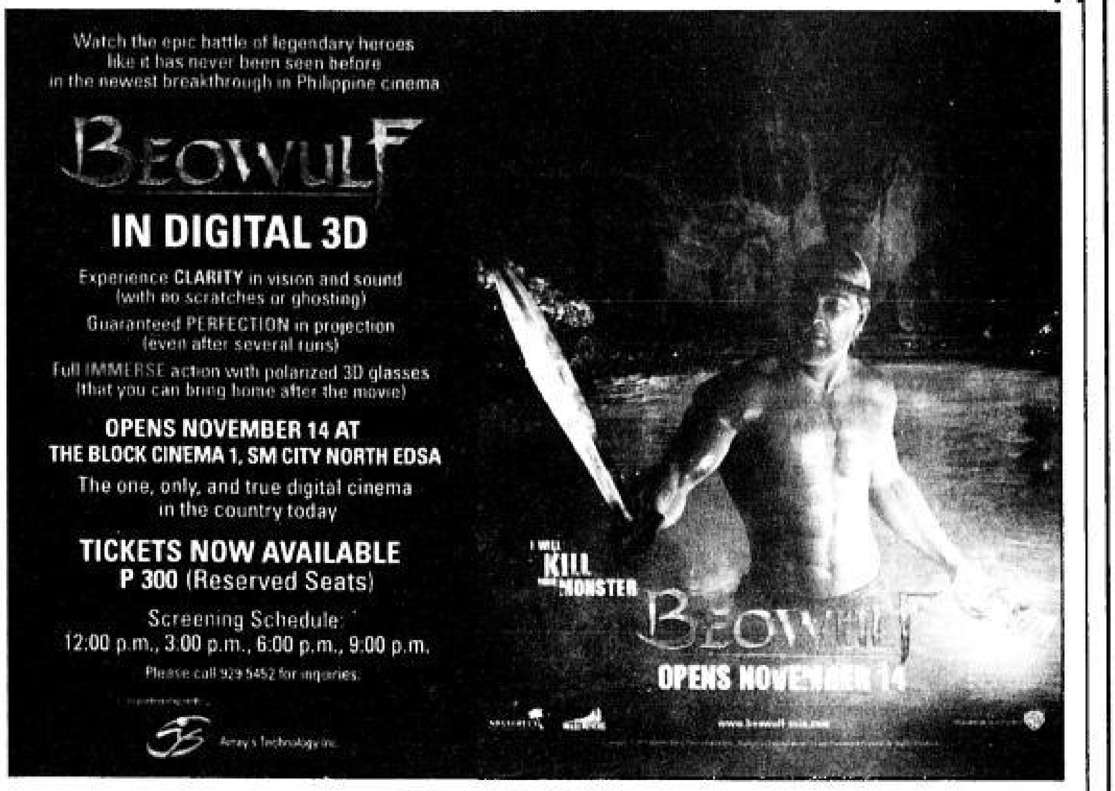
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DEEP SEA 3D Admission Price: P250
10:30 AM
T-REX Admission Price: P250
2:30 PM

1 ENCHANTED
2 BEOWULF
3 HITMAN
4 BOOGEYMAN 2
5 THE NANNY DIARIES
6 ONE MORE CHANCE

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1 BEOWULF (DIGITAL 3D)
2 THE GAME PLAN
3 HITMAN
4 ONE MORE CHANCE
5 HITMAN
6 BEOWULF
7 ONE MORE CHANCE
8 ENCHANTED
9 THE NANNY DIARIES/ 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
10 BOOGEYMAN 2
11 THE GAME PLAN
12 ONE MORE CHANCE

SM MEGACINEMA 633-1901
1 ENCHANTED
2 HIDE & SEEK
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 HITMAN
5 ENCHANTED
6 RESIDENT EVIL 3
7 LIONS FOR LAMBS
8 BOOGEYMAN 2
9 BEOWULF
10 ONE MORE CHANCE
11 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
12 THE GAME PLAN

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 935-0749
1 LIONS FOR LAMBS
2 ONE MORE CHANCE
3 THE GAME PLAN
4 HITMAN
5 HIDE & SEEK
6 BOOGEYMAN 2
7 BEOWULF
8 ONE MORE CHANCE
9 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
10 THE GHOST SON
11 ENCHANTED
12 THE NANNY DIARIES

SM CITY BICUTAN 776-3055
1 HITMAN
2 ENCHANTED
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 BEOWULF

SM CITY SAN LAZARO 786-2488
1 RESERVED
2 BEOWULF
3 HITMAN
4 BOOGEYMAN 2
5 ENCHANTED
6 ONE MORE CHANCE

SM CITY SUCAT 829-4975
1 BEOWULF
2 ONE MORE CHANCE
3 HITMAN
4 ENCHANTED

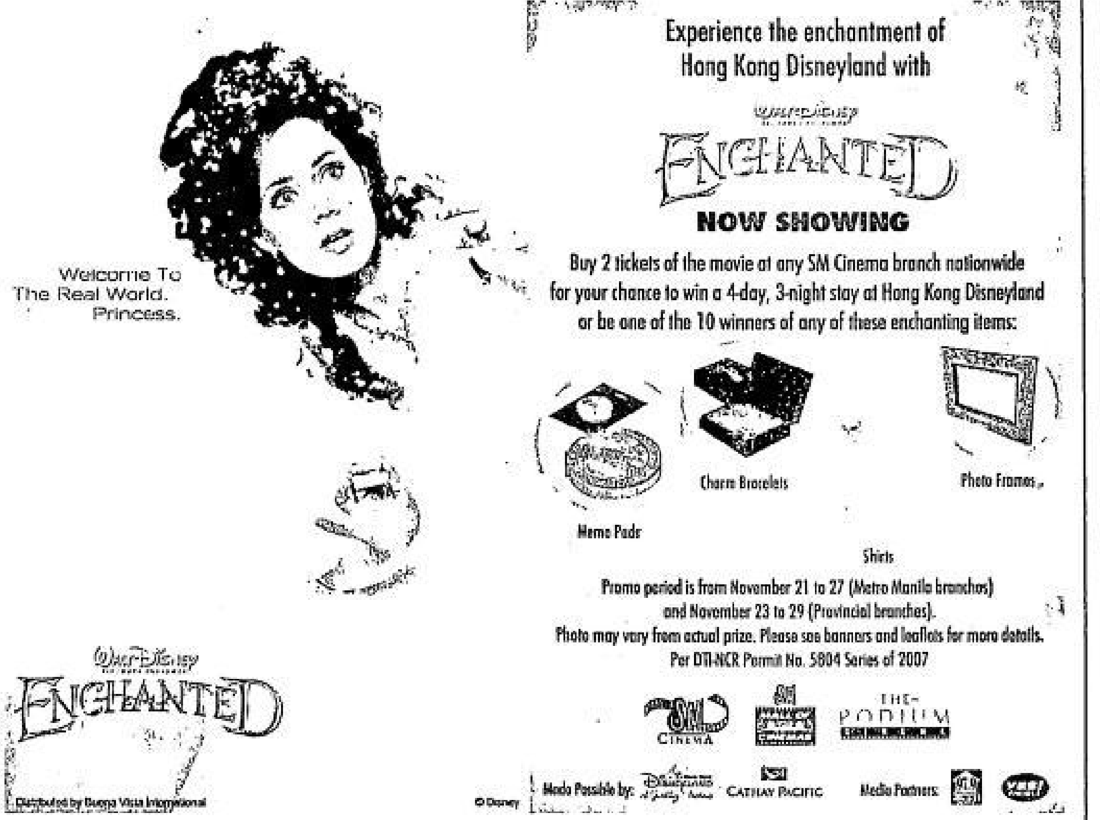
SM SOUTHMALL 806-6888
1 HITMAN
2 BEOWULF
3 ENCHANTED
4 ONE MORE CHANCE
5 THE NANNY DIARIES
6 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
7 BOOGEYMAN 2
8 HIDE & SEEK
9 WE OWN THE NIGHT

SM CITY STA. MESA 716-1416
1 HITMAN
2 THE GAME PLAN
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 ENCHANTED
5 BEOWULF
6 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
7 THE NANNY DIARIES
8 LIONS FOR LAMBS
9 BOOGEYMAN 2
10 HIDE & SEEK

NOW OPEN
SM SUPERCENTER MUNTINLUPA 862 5693
1 ONE MORE CHANCE
2 ENCHANTED
3 HITMAN
4 BEOWULF

SM CITY MANILA 523-9240
1 BEOWULF
2 HITMAN
3 WE OWN THE NIGHT
4 ONE MORE CHANCE
5 ENCHANTED
6 RESERVED
7 BOOGEYMAN 2
8 HIDE & SEEK
9 ONE MORE CHANCE
10 THE GAME PLAN
11 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
12 THE NANNY DIARIES

SM VALENZUELA 293-3917
1 ENCHANTED
2 HITMAN
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 BEOWULF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SM CITY BACOOR (046)417-3868
1 ENCHANTED
2 THE GAME PLAN
3 HITMAN
4 ONE MORE CHANCE
5 BEOWULF
6 ONE MORE CHANCE
7 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
8 BOOGEYMAN 2

SM CITY MARILAO (044)9332013-17
1 ENCHANTED
2 ONE MORE CHANCE
3 BALLS OF FURY
4 LIONS FOR LAMBS

SM SUPERCENTER MOLINO (046)474-3180
1 ENCHANTED
2 ONE MORE CHANCE
3 HITMAN
4 BEOWULF

SM CITY DASMARINAS (046)4333201-04
1 BEOWULF
2 LIONS FOR LAMBS
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 ENCHANTED

NOW OPEN
SM CITY TAYTAY 286-2502 to 04
1 ENCHANTED
2 BEOWULF
3 ONE MORE CHANCE

SM CITY LIPA (043) 784-0187
1 EL CANTANTE
2 ONE MORE CHANCE
3 ENCHANTED
4 30 DAYS OF NIGHT

SM CITY PAMPANGA (045)9637081-85
1 HITMAN
2 ENCHANTED
3 BEOWULF
4 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
5 ONE MORE CHANCE
6 ONE MORE CHANCE

SM CITY STA. ROSA (049)5340811
1 ENCHANTED
2 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 BEOWULF

SM CITY LUCENA (042)7108977-80
1 ONE MORE CHANCE
2 ENCHANTED
3 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
4 BEOWULF

SM CITY BAGUIO (074)6197838-39
1 ENCHANTED
2 ONE MORE CHANCE
3 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
4 BEOWULF

SM CITY CLARK (045)625-5844-45
1 BEOWULF
2 ENCHANTED
3 UNREST
4 HITMAN
5 ONE MORE CHANCE
6 ONE MORE CHANCE

SM CITY BATANGAS 885-6401-04
1 ENCHANTED
2 ONE MORE CHANCE
3 30 DAYS OF NIGHT
4 BALLS OF FURY

VISAYAS MINDANAO

SM CITY DAVAO (082)2976998
1 BEOWULF
2 THE NANNY DIARIES
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 UNREST
5 BALLS OF FURY
6 ENCHANTED

SM CAGAYAN DE ORO (088)859-2884
1 KUNG FU FIGHTER
2 ONE MORE CHANCE
3 LIONS FOR LAMBS
4 ENCHANTED

SM CITY ILOILO (033)3209422
1 ATAUL FOR RENT
2 THE GHOST SON
3 ONE MORE CHANCE
4 ENCHANTED
5 BEOWULF
6 EL CANTANTE
7 RESERVED
8 RESERVED

SM CITY CEBU (032)231-3876
1 HITMAN
2 ENCHANTED
3 BEOWULF
4 MR. WOODCOCK
5 THE GHOST SON
6 ATAUL FOR RENT
7 BALLS OF FURY
8 ONE MORE CHANCE

SM CITY BACOLOD (034) 708 1010
1 ONE MORE CHANCE
2 ENCHANTED
3 BEOWULF
4 BALLS OF FURY

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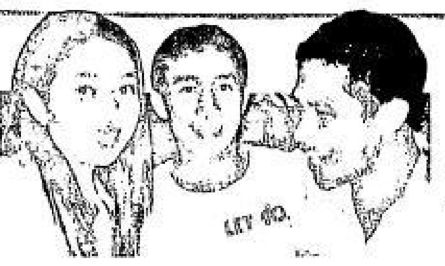
Beauties raise funds for cancer patients



MUTYA ng Pilipinas 2007 2nd runner up Rica Taylor, with donors.

BRUCE Quebral helps collect donations.

By Armin Adina

BINIBINING PILIPINAS AND MUTYA NG Pilipinas beauties are working together to raise funds for the benefit of cancer patients.

Ladies of the two longest-running national beauty pageants raised P30,000 last week in a single activity for the Cancer Warriors Foundation (CWF) at Il Ponticello bar in Makati City.

Present were were Mutya ng Pilipinas 2007 2nd runner-up Rica Taylor, 2007 Bb. Pilipinas semifinalist Melanie Adjarani, and 2005 Bb. Pilipinas-Tourism Wendy Valdez. Rica, who celebrated her 23rd birthday that night, is a CWF volunteer.

Rica told INQUIRER Entertainment she asked the bar owners' permission to collect donations from the guests. Not only did the owners agree, Rica said; they also vowed to support future endeavors. Margaret Wilson, 2007 Bb. Pilipinas-World, currently in China for the Miss World pageant, called and pledged support as well.

Said Rica, "Who would have thought Mutyas and Binibinis would ever get together for a common cause?"

More beauties are expected to join subsequent events.

Wendy's boyfriend, actor Bruce Quebral, also helped at Il Ponticello. Donors received gifts from Ever Bilena cosmetics and Mary Pauline Salon.

Log on to www.c-warriors.org or www.cancer-warriors.org.

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1	ONE MORE CHANCE	2:40, 5:20, 8:00,10:30	PG-13
2	HITMAN	3:05, 5:30, 7:55, 10:20	R-13
3	ENCHANTED	2:00, 4:50, 7:40, 10:30	G
4	BEOWULF	2:25, 5:05, 7:45, 10:20	PG-13

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HITMAN	1:30 / 3:30 / 5:30 / 7:30 / 9:30
ENCHANTED	12:20 / 1:30 / 2:40 / 3:50 / 5:00 6:10 / 7:20 / 8:30 / 9:40
BOOGEYMAN 2	12:20 / 5:00 / 9:40
ONE MORE CHANCE	12:40 / 1:25 / 3:25 / 4:00 6:10 / 6:45 / 9:00 / 9:30
BEOWULF	1:05 / 3:50 / 6:35 / 9:20
NANNY DIARIES	2:40 / 7:20
GAMEPLAN	12:20 / 5:00 / 9:40
SUPERBAD	2:40 / 7:20
ENCHANTED	12:50 / 3:10
HITMAN	6:30 / 9:00

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Nov. 28, Wednesday
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Nov. 29, Thursday 8pm

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Nov. 30, Friday, 8pm

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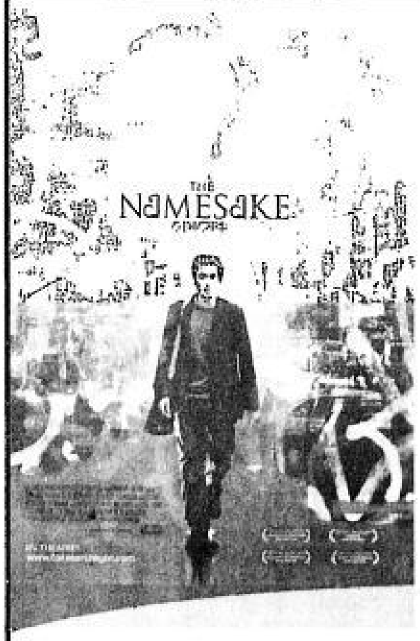
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
GLORIETTA 1	ENCHANTED	HITMAN	BEOWULF	ONE MORE CHANCE			
GLORIETTA 4	ONE MORE CHANCE	BEOWULF	THX HITMAN GUARANTEED SEATS	THE NANNY DIARIES / ONE MORE CHANCE	ENCHANTED	ENCHANTED	THE GAMEPLAN
GREENBELT 1	HITMAN	ENCHANTED					
GREENBELT 3	THX HITMAN GUARANTEED SEATS	THX ENCHANTED GUARANTEED SEATS	ENCHANTED GUARANTEED SEATS	SUPERBAD GUARANTEED SEATS	BEOWULF GUARANTEED SEATS		
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	THX ENCHANTED	HITMAN	ONE MORE CHANCE	ENCHANTED	BEOWULF		
AYALA CENTER CEBU	ENCHANTED	HITMAN	ONE MORE CHANCE	BEOWULF			
MARKET! MARKET!	ONE MORE CHANCE	BEOWULF	THE NANNY DIARIES	HITMAN	ENCHANTED		
TRINOMA • THX Certified • All-Digital Sound • All-Stadium Seating • Computerized Ticketing System • Recliner Seats	ONE MORE CHANCE	THE GAMEPLAN	HITMAN GUARANTEED SEATS	BEOWULF GUARANTEED SEATS	THE NANNY DIARIES / ONE MORE CHANCE	ENCHANTED	THX ENCHANTED GUARANTEED SEATS

AT THE MALLS
CONCIERGE HOTLINE NUMBERS:
Glorietta - 752 7272
Greenbelt - 757 4853 to 54
Alabang Town Center - 842 2782; 772 1860
Ayala Center Cebu - (032) 231 5342 loc. 324
Market! Market! - 886 7519
TriNoma - 901 3000
Ayala Malls

glorietta	Sounds of Christmas: Christmas Chorale feat. Phil. Jesuit Community November 24; 6pm; Glorietta 4 Park
GREENBELT	Holiday Open Concert November 24 & Dec 2; 8pm; Greenbelt 3 Park
ALABANG TOWN CENTER	Seussical The Musical November 23 to 25; 11am, 3pm & 6pm; Activity Center
AYALA CENTER CEBU	Metrobank Car Event November 24 to 25; Activity Center, Paseos and Rotunda Area
MARKET! MARKET!	Lifestyle and Vanity Outlet Sale November 19 to 23; Activity Center
Greenbelt Onstage	Repertory Philippines presents FIDDLER ON THE ROOF November 9 - December 16, 2007 For inquiries, pls. call 887-0710 or visit www.repertory-philippines.com
Ayala MUSEUM	WATER: THE MEDIUM by Juvenal Sanso November 24 to January 13, 2008; Ground Floor Gallery For more info, pls. call 757-7117 to 21 loc. 14 or email museum_inquiry@ayalamuseum.org
Tri Noma	Rhythm Academy: Sam Concepcion with the Augustinian Larks December 9; 6pm; Activity Center Rhythm Academy: Pops Fernandez and The UP Cherubim and Seraphim December 16; 6pm; Activity Center



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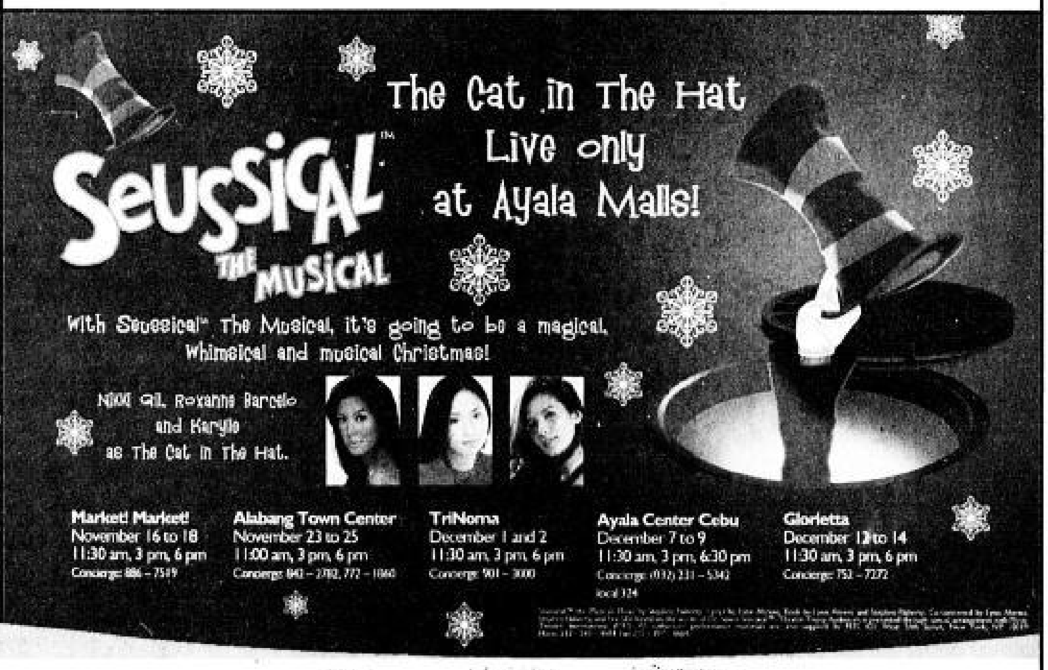

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November 23 to 25
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TriNoma
December 1 and 2
11:30 am, 3 pm, 6 pm
Concierge: 901 - 3000

Ayala Center Cebu
December 7 to 9
11:30 am, 3 pm, 6:30 pm
Concierge: (032) 231 - 5342 local 324

Glorietta
December 12 to 14
11:30 am, 3 pm, 6 pm
Concierge: 752 - 7272

glorietta GREENBELT ALABANG TOWN CENTER AYALA CENTER CEBU MARKET! MARKET! TriNoma

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STRICTLY FOR 13 YEARS OF AGE AND UP

A movie about moving on—and coming full circle

VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

CATHY GARCIA-MOLINA'S LATEST movie, "One More Chance," starts off with a dynamic bang, showing lovers played by **Bea Alonzo** and **John Lloyd Cruz** still squabbling after five years of being together. Clearly there's something wrong with the "perfect" union of these two beautiful people.

That "something" boils down to his controlling ways, which have tightened like a noose around her pretty neck. What to do? She takes a deep breath—and breaks up with him.

At first, he doesn't think she's serious. How could she "throw away" five "beautiful" years, just like that? But, she sticks to her guns with gritted teeth—and he hurts like heck. For weeks. Months, even.

Much later, he and she finally learn to "move on." Well, sort of. He still freaks out when he sees her with a new hunk (**Derek Ramsay**), although the relationship is strictly platonic.

Then, he gets himself a new girl (**Maja Salvador**)—and Bea finds herself suffering. What gives? We thought she wanted to extricate herself from his asphyxiating embrace, so why is she feeling pangs of jealousy? Could the original couple ever get back together again?

Well, naturally. That's clearly the way this movie's plot arc has been structured, so it's only a matter of time before the regulation Happy Ending is worked out.

Sounds a bit forced? Well, that's mainstream cinema for you—stereotypical viewer expectations have to be fulfilled, no matter how weakly worked out the solution may be.

Which is not to say that "One More Chance" is a bad film. In fact, its first half is focused, detailed and dynamic, not just telling the lead lovers' story but also situating it within the clarifying context of their mutual friends and respective relatives. That isn't an easy thing to do well, so the director should stand up and take a well-deserved bow.

Trouble is, she can't sustain the brisk pace she's set for herself, and the movie's second half betrays the film's basic weaknesses. These include some rather extraneous characters (played by **Al Tantay** and **Nanette Inventor**) who aren't developed properly so they can impinge on the central characters, some escapist twists and turns in the story, and unthinking flubs like having architect Bea inspecting a building construction site in high heels.

But the movie's most serious lapse is the blithe, cavalier way with which it disposes of John Lloyd's new love (Maja), so the original couple's reconciliation can be easily effected.

Not only does this do an injustice to Maja's character (what is she, used tissue paper?), but it weakens the entire movie's dramatic cogency and believability.

Instead of being so cavalier in dismissing John Lloyd's new girlfriend, this film's director and writers could have dealt with the "triangulated" conflict head-on, and the extra effort and honest artistic concern could have resulted in a more complex, truthful and emotionally instructive film.

On point of performance, Bea and John Lloyd do better here than in their previous co-starrers. But John Lloyd should continue to push himself more, so that he doesn't rely on his good looks and facile smile to win points for himself.

Bea is more venturesome here, occasionally pushing her performance beyond the usual "looker" and "kilig" parameters. Maja also does well, except that her character arc is artificially aborted by standard mainstream exigencies.

That, by the way, goes double for Derek Ramsay, who's limited to just being a shoulder to cry on for tearful Bea. How frustrating it must have been for the actor to find himself restricted to serving as the male version of the regulation "best friend" of the female lead, a role that used to be reserved for distaff or gay starlets.

Despite these negative notes, "One More Chance" is still eminently viewable for its plus points. They show that the production's heart, if not its good judgment, is in the right place.

PIOLO Pascual and Sam Milby flank lawyer Joji Alonso during a press conference following the filing of a complaint against writer Lolit Solis. Reader/writer John L. Silva believes ABS-CBN should have counseled the two guys to "weather the storm." RYAN LIM

What is their problem?

FEEDBACK

From John L. Silva (jsilva79@hotmail.com):

AMERICAN MATINEE IDOL Tab Hunter comes to mind while reading the multimillion peso libel suit filed by actors Piolo Pascual and Sam Milby against gossip columnist Lolit Solis for insinuating that they're gay. In 1956, Tab was at the peak of his career. The handsome "boy-next-door" was the leading man in movies with co-stars like Lana Turner, Natalie Wood and Sophia Loren. His stature rivaled James Dean and Marlon Brando and his studio, Warner Brothers, made a lot of money on him. He went into singing and released his first major nationwide hit "Young Love." Everyone had a crush on Tab that one Valentine's Day, he received over 60,000 Valentine telegrams. Everything was on the up for the young star despite the fact he was gay.

'Tomorrow's toilet paper'

Tab wasn't out then but in his tell-all autobiography released in 2005, (Tab Hunter, Confidential) he talked about a Hollywood peopled with gay producers, directors, writers, and actors.

At the height of his career, Confidential, a tabloid magazine, ran a story about Tab caught by the police after raiding a private gay party. Tab was worried but his producer, the movie mogul Jack Warner, didn't pay the controversy any mind nor issue retractions nor demand that Tab go on "arranged" dates. He simply told Tab: "Remember this. Today's headlines, tomorrow's toilet paper."

Lolit Solis was supposed to have seen, with her own two eyes, Piolo and Sam in an amorous situation at a hotel poolside. The actors' lawyer, Joji Alonso, denied that her clients were there that day. Attorney Alonso contends that such accusations destroy the "bankability" of her clients and fans would no longer watch their movies or attend their concerts if they found out they were gay. The whopping 12 million pesos in moral damages being demanded in the libel suit was to make up for the "mental anguish, besmirched reputation and social humiliation" the actors are now undergoing for being branded gay.

Aside from the movies and the concerts, the two actors, using their grins and bods, have peddled on billboards practically every product known to mankind. If Attorney Alonso now categorically states that her clients can't sell a can of tuna, and their movies will be boycotted, and they are now mentally distraught because they've been called gay, what do you think we gays feel? Suicidal?

Failed marriages, sex, and checking who's gay is the redundant theme in show biz gossip. If you're young and handsome and trying to make it in show biz, you're automatically grist for the rumor mill. A P12-million lawsuit against a hapless columnist with a checkered background and whose writing isn't worth getting one's panties in a twist, seems like an overkill.

Lawyer Alonso gets the prize, though, for her reasons on pressing the libel suit. She says the gossip item is a crime against her client's honor, their purity and dignity now destroyed. "Because up to this day," she adds, "we all know for a fact that, with all due courtesy to the members of the third sex, it is still not an accepted thing in this country."

Stating that one's purity and dignity is ruined for being called gay offends and insults gays. Categorizing us under the politically incorrect "Third Sex" and saying our behavior is not an accepted "thing" in this country makes one wonder what country and century she inhabits.

Alonso seems to be oblivious to the fact that, barring a few morality crusaders, Filipino gays, lesbians, bisexuals and transsexuals live and work in one of the more tolerant and accepting societies in Asia. If Attorney Alonso believes that we gays are not an "accepted thing" in this country, I shall tell all my gay friends and supporters to boycott her client's movies, concerts, and products. Why spare our hard earned gay pesos to people who don't accept us? I shall also tell all my gay Fil-Am friends the next time Piolo and Sam want to crash the Fil-Am market. Gay power and gay dollars will teach Attorney Alonso the meaning of acceptance.

A little gratitude

The network studio ABS-CBN should have repeated Warner Brother's class act manner and counseled their twink stars to weather the gossip. After all, the studio has made so much money from their gay talents, gay writers, gay producers, gay executives and gay make-up artists, you'd expect a little more gratitude. Why, if the studio was swallowed up by an earthquake tomorrow, there goes half the gay population!

Check http://johnsilva.blogspot.com.

Will Smith as the last human

TAKE FIVE

THE LAST MAN ON EARTH… IS NOT alone.

In the Warner Bros. action adventure "I Am Legend," the big-screen adaptation of the legendary novel by Richard Matheson, Robert Neville (Will Smith) is a brilliant scientist, but he could not contain an unstoppable, incurable, man-made virus. Somehow immune, Neville is now the last human survivor in what is left of New York City—and maybe the world.

For three years, Neville has faithfully sent out daily radio messages: "My name is Robert Neville. I am a survivor living in New York City. If there is anybody out there… Please."

But he is not alone. Mutant victims of the plague—The Infected—lurk in the shadows… watching Neville's every move… waiting for him to make a fatal mistake.

Directed by Francis Lawrence, "I Am Legend" is written for the screen by Mark Protosevich and Akiva Goldsman, based on the screenplay by John William and Joyce H. Corrington.

Following are excerpts from an interview with the Hollywood A-list actor:

What attracted you to this film?

It's the last thing you expect. I read the script almost 10 years ago and I just love how bold it is… the last man on earth.

How do you feel about the character; is there anything of you in him?

It was some of the opposite of who I am in the character that intrigued me—it's rare that I feel alone and actually am alone.

As an actor, how difficult is it to prepare for a role where you don't have other actors with whom to interact?

Fortunately, I've made special effects movies a lot, so there's a whole lot of green screen stuff where you're actually acting by yourself or with a green tennis ball that's supposed to be a monster. So, my experience has made me feel comfortable in those situations.

Do you consider this film to be sci-fi, or sci-fact – how real do you think is this situation?

The types of movies I'm trying to make now are non-genre. I'm trying to fit the small "art movies" into the middle of the big, stellar, blockbuster casing. I think that with "I Am Legend," the design is non-genre. The movie is designed around the exploration of the trauma the person experiences. We're trying not to allow the genre to dictate what the scene can be.

Have you always liked to do sci-fi films in the past?

I have always loved sci-fi. This movie is more of a throwback to the days before lots of big special effects came in, when science fiction was all story. In this film all the concentration is on character and story. The special effects are this added bonus that just keeps punching you in the face when you least expect it.

How physical a role is this for you?

There's not a lot of hand-to-hand combat with the Dark Seekers (the mutants of the film); it's mostly from a distance, and because of the nature of their strength and speed, you can't really fight them up close. It was mostly running and shooting.

I believe your daughter is in the film?

Yes. Well, my last film, "The Pursuit of Happyness," was with my son, Jaden, and my daughter just wasn't having that. She wasn't happy about that at all.

There was a role for a daughter in this script, in the pre-apocalyptic section where I'm trying to get my family out of New York, so there are a couple of scenes with my daughter, Willow, who is 6 years old.

How different was the experience compared with doing the music video?

It's a hugely different experience. There's no dialogue in music videos, which makes it a completely different skill set.

How much time do you devote to music now?

No music at all. Specifically, with "I Am Legend," I think that I'm hitting a stride right now and as an actor I'm growing exponentially with every project.

How about writing and producing?

There's a filmmaking process that me and Akiva Goldsman have been developing. We're looking at it in terms of a team sport and not in the old school. You put together a team and you go out as a team and try to win.

"I READ the script 10 years ago," says Smith. "It's a hugely different experience."

"I Am Legend" opens soon in local theaters.

'Kingdom' raises complex questions

REVIEW

NEW YORK—SIMULTANEOUSLY a well-crafted action flick and a drama about global politics, "The Kingdom" wants to appeal to both the lowest common denominator as well as those seeking slightly more intellectual fare.

It moderately succeeds at achieving both.

Director Peter Berg, working from a script by Matthew Michael Carnahan, raises some intriguing questions about cultural misconceptions and revenge, then comes up with answers that feel a bit too pat.

He's assembled a strong cast in Jamie Foxx, Jennifer Garner, Chris Cooper and Jason Bateman, then has them solve a complicated terrorist attack in a matter of mere days in a country where they're not exactly wanted.

The four star as FBI agents who secretly travel to Saudi Arabia to determine who was behind a massive, deadly bombing at an American oil-company compound in Riyadh.

Overqualified

Foxx, who's surely overqualified for this gig, nonetheless brings his trademark cool and charisma to the role of Special Agent Ronald Fleury, the team's leader who finagles last-minute access to the country by threatening to blackmail the Saudi ambassador to the United States.

Garner doesn't get to do much as Special Agent Janet Mayes, the group's forensics specialist. As a woman she is treated with particular scrutiny, and in a morgue scene is brusquely informed that she's not allowed to touch the bodies of Muslim victims. Which she should have anticipated, since she's also supposed to be a linguistics expert.

Cooper provides the most substance as the group's veteran, bomb expert Grant Sykes, who stuns the local investigators with his down-home willingness to get his hands dirty — along with his face and entire body — while digging for clues at the center of the bomb's impact.

And Bateman, in a rare role that lets him show he's capable of more than comedy, co-stars as intelligence guru Adam Leavitt. Yes, he gets a few chances to crack wise and provide comic relief, but he's also the one who ends up in the most terrifying situation of all.

Our fantastic foursome run into bureaucratic roadblocks before they even leave the country; the attorney general, played by an overly pompous Danny Huston, prohibits them from traveling to Saudi Arabia out of concern for the sensitivity of Saudi royals, which they defy. Once they arrive, they find they've been assigned a baby sitter in Col. Al Ghazi (Ashraf Barhom from "Paradise Now," a real standout), whose job is to make sure that they're safe, which doesn't necessarily coincide with making sure they carry out a thorough investigation.

Jeremy Piven, as a US State Department official, also wants them to leave as quickly as possible to avoid any potential international conflicts. Essentially, he's playing yet another version of Ari Gold from "Entourage" — and by now, it has gotten seriously out of control. Piven has turned into a parody of himself. He has got to show he's capable of more.

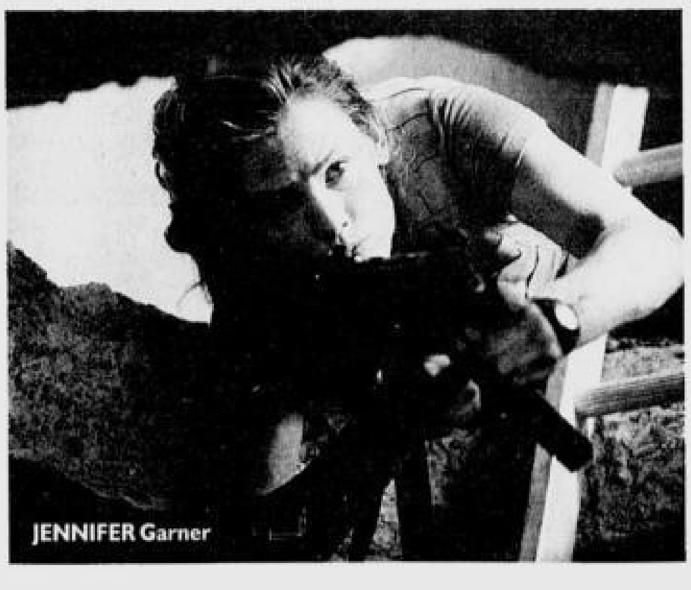
Fleury and Al Ghazi form an unlikely bond, which conveniently allows Fleury to come full-circle from the loss of his friend at the film's start. Foxx and Barhom are so good together, though, they make this obvious device more tolerable than it should be.

Great look

What also keeps "The Kingdom" engaging throughout is that it's great to look at. (Mauro Fiore, whose films include "Training Day," is the cinematographer). Shot in the heat of Arizona and on location in Abu Dhabi, it has a visual intensity and intimacy reminiscent of Michael Mann (who happens to be one of the producers), with a prolonged, climactic gun battle that's especially brutal.

By having Fleury and Co. annihilate everyone in their path with a seemingly unlimited amount of firepower, perhaps "The Kingdom" is trying to say that vengeance is blind. But it also looks pretty cathartic. *Christy Lemire, AP*

"The Kingdom" opens Wednesday in local theaters."



JENNIFER Garner

Carols for celebs, Part 2

DOLLY WOOD

Dolly Anne Carvajal

I WAS SWAMPED WITH E-MAIL FROM readers saying they enjoyed the Christmas carols I made up for feuding celebs. Here's a part two, all in the spirit of good Yuletide cheer.

I trust the stars won't dampen the holiday spirit by getting *pikon*. Lighten up like your Christmas tree, *woncha*?

Gretchen Barretto to Dawn Zulueta (to the tune of "Silent Night"):

"Silent war, *Sinong pa-istar?*
Dress is glam, Hair is bright
Round the studio has
Microwave and Vuitton
Eh ano naman kung
Meron ako 'nun?
Sleep *ka na lang* and *deadma* please.
Sleep and *deadma* please"

Angel Locsin to GMA 7 Bigwigs ("Do You Hear What I Hear?"):

"Said my manager to Artist Center/Do you see what I see
Way up in the sky, li'l Dama
Do you see what I see
A star, a star switching networks
With a TF as big as solons' pork
With a TF as big as solons' pork."

Lani Mercado to all women linked to her husband Bong Revilla ("Frosty the Snowman"):

"Bong my dear Husband
Is a flirty happy soul
With an *agimat* and a button nose
And two chinky eyes to make you fall
Bong my dear husband
Is legendary, women say
He was made of snow but his children know
How they all came to life one day."

John Estrada to Gretchen Barretto ("Let it Snow"):

"Oh the *chismis* outside is frightful
But your kiss is so delightful
And since we've no place to go/ Let our pic show, let it show, let it show."

James Yap to Hope Centeno ("It's Beginning to look a lot like Christmas"):

"It's beginning to look a lot like Krissy/ Ev'rywhere you go;
Take a look in the billboards, glistening once again
With Baby James and silver lanes aglow.
It's beginning to look a lot like Krissy,
Her face in every store,
But the scandalous sight to see is *mahuli tayo*
Behind closed doors.".

Dennis Trillo to Carlene Aguilar and Cristine Reyes ("All I Want For Christmas Is My Two Front Teeth"):

"Every body stops
and stares at me
These two girls are
mad as you can see
I don't know just who
to blame for this catastrophe!
But my one wish on Christmas Eve
is as plain as it can be!
All I want for Christmas
is my two girlfriends
my two girlfriends,
see my two girlfriends!"

E-mail wateringholeshangrila@yahoo.com.

PATRICK Page, right, star of "Dr. Seuss' How The Grinch Stole Christmas!" greet youngsters at the St. James Theatre as performances resume in New York on Friday. AP

Curtains up for Dr. Seuss

NEW YORK—THE GRINCH—NOT to mention all those singing and dancing Whos—came back to Broadway Friday, two weeks after the musical about Dr. Seuss' celebrated green meanie was shut down because of the stagehands strike.

When actor Patrick Page, dressed in his furry chartreuse costume, slunk on stage at the St. James Theatre, the crowd erupted in cheers. It was the first performance of "Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas!" since Nov. 9, the musical's opening night.

The walkout by Local 1, the stagehands union, the following day shut down more than two dozens plays and musicals.

First in history

Producer James Sanna said just before the 11 a.m. performance (the first of four on Friday) began: "This may be the first time in Broadway history a producer has made a curtain speech on two consecutive performances. The first one was a traditional one on our opening night and now 14 days later on our reopening. But if there ever was a show and a company that deserves to be back, it is ours. I am very proud and humbled the way the whole company rallied around us on this."

Theatergoers milled in front of the theater, working their way through reporters and TV crews to get in. Across the street at the dark Majestic Theatre (which houses "The Phantom of the Opera") pickets from Local 1 quietly walked in a circle.

Vendors hawked $20 souvenir programs (which includes a "Grinch" knapsack).

Mark Cleveland, his wife Karla, and their two sons, 10-year-old Adam and 8-year-old Connor, had come from the Netherlands Antilles to see the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade and then maybe some shows. They were leaving for Los Angeles immediately after seeing "Grinch."

Sam Micalizzi of Brooklyn was out front. His 13-year-old daughter Marina, is in "Grinch," playing Scallop Who. He had brought along Marina's 10-year-old sister, Gianna, as well as the girls' aunt, Carol Davis of San Diego, to see the musical.

"We think 'Grinch' is an important show" Davis said. "It has a really good message."

The reopening of the $6 million production was ordered Wednesday by state Supreme Court Justice Helen Freedman, saying: "I think one Grinch in town is enough."

Her ruling came a day after she heard arguments from producers of the show and Jujamcyn Theaters, which owns the St. James. Producers, citing a special contract between the show and Jujamcyn, wanted the show to go on.

The judge said her decision was based on a provision of the theater lease, adding that she believed the production company would be irreparably harmed if the show wasn't permitted to resume its run.

Limited run

"Grinch" is on a limited holiday run through Jan. 6. It had 15 performances scheduled for Thanksgiving week, one of Broadway's most lucrative times of the year.

The dispute between Local 1 and the League of American Theatres and Producers has closed 26 other Broadway productions.

Stagehands—who include scenery and prop handlers, carpenters, electricians and lighting and sound technicians—have been working without a contract since the end of July. The labor dispute is focused on how many workers are required to open a Broadway show and keep it running.

Eight other shows, whose theaters have separate contracts with the league, remain unaffected by the walkout. All off-Broadway productions are open, too. *AP*

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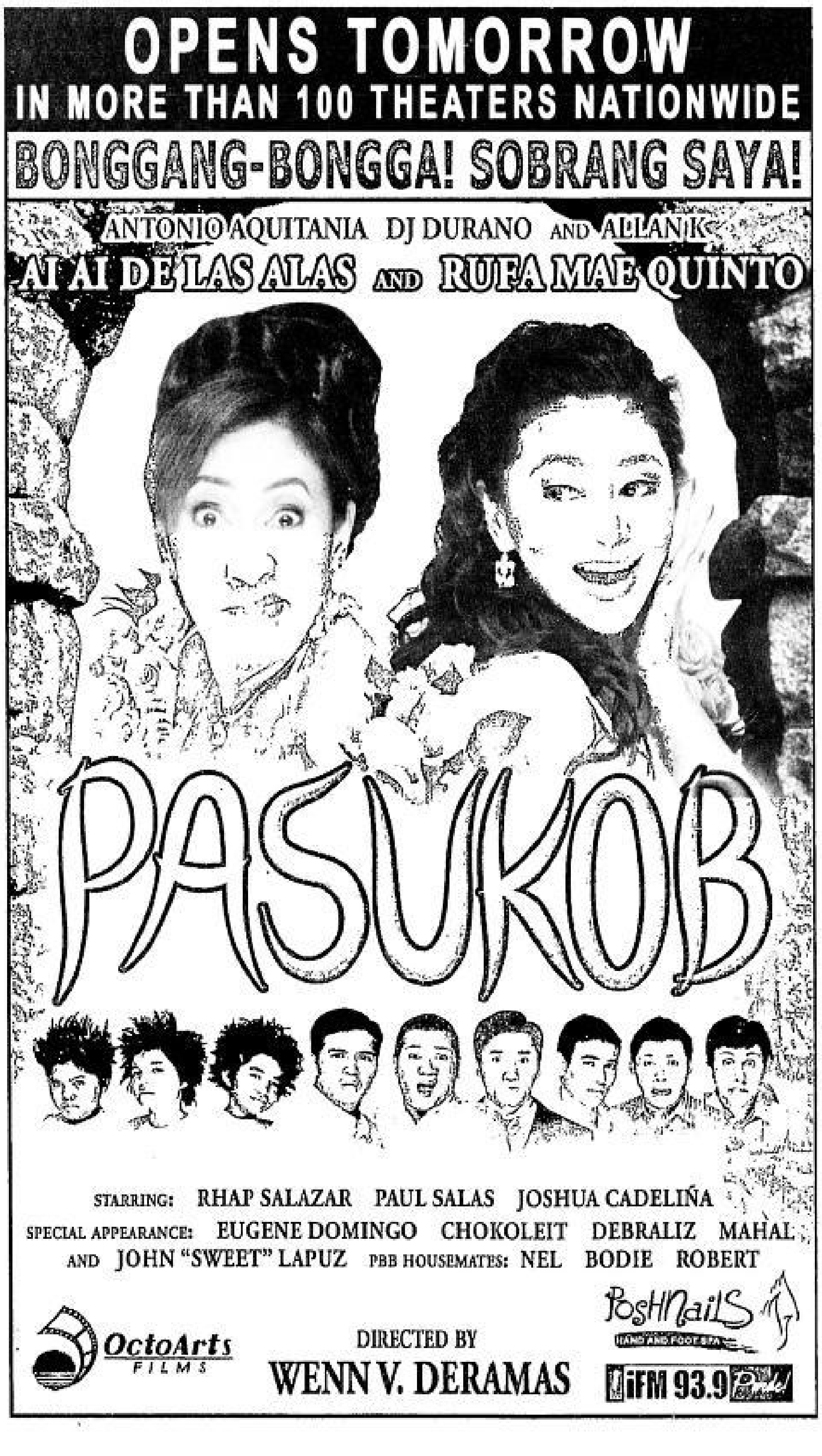

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